BEST EVER MAG!

DEVIL MAY CRY 3 PS2'S SUPER-SLICK GUN-SLINGER RETURNS | CATWOMAN GET YOUR CLAWS INTO THE REVIEW!

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES

CVG

SPIDER-MAN 2

GRAND THEFT ARACHNO!

Spidey takes a leaf out of Vice City's book and comes good!

50 REASONS WHY grand theft auto San Andreas IS GANGSTER No.1

JUICED VS NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

Two red-hot racers get modded-up, maxed-out and mash it up against each other

WIN A SONY PSP

ENTER NOW AND GET YOURS FIRST!

The Chronicles Of Riddick

Escape From Butcher Bay

FIRST FOR XBOX! Getting brutal behind bars with bald destroyer Vin Diesel!

OVER 72 COOL NEW GAMES

- Star Wars Battlefront
- Tiger Woods '05
- Champ Manager 5
- Zelda Four Swords
- Rainbow Six 3 Black Arrow
- Mario Vs Donkey Kong
- Psi-Ops

And much more!

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

WE'RE OFFICIALLY PRO EVO'S #1 FAN!

First hot pics of the world class footie game that's hotter than Rooney!

Smackdown! Vs Raw

WWE GETS DOUBLE-TEAMED!

WWE's two biggest names join forces for the toughest, roughest wrestler EVER!

SEPT 2004 * ISSUE 276 * £3.25

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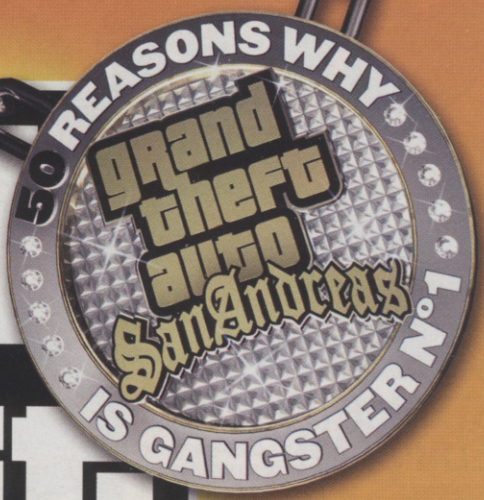
SEPTEMBER 2004

THE MONTH THAT...

CVG shows you exactly why West is definitely best, especially when it comes to San Andreas...



grand theft auto SanAndreas

GANG STAR! Why the next GTA will be the biggest gaming event of all time

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CVG IN NUMBERS

NUMBER OF GAMES	NUMBER OF SCREENS	GAMES RATED	ANIMALS HURT
398	880	64	0

MOVIE MENTAL! RIDDICK, CATWOMAN, SPIDEY & MORE

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG
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Big-ballin', shot-callin' one-on-one hoops sim where court skills turn into cash for the crib. Live the life of a true playa with our on-point preview.

STRAIGHT OUTTA CLAPHAM!

Me and my boys, we ain't no pussy-assed ganstas. We're CVG, not OG.

But since we saw San Andreas in action we all actin' like we from the street, messin' 'bout wit bitches and 45s. But fact is we're just desperate to play this year's biggest gaming event, and until we get our mitts on the next Grand Theft Auto, acting like we're in the game is as good as it gets. Sad, maybe, but wait till you see all the latest GTA stuff on page 22. Who's the fool now?

Alex Simmons
Alex Simmons *Editor*

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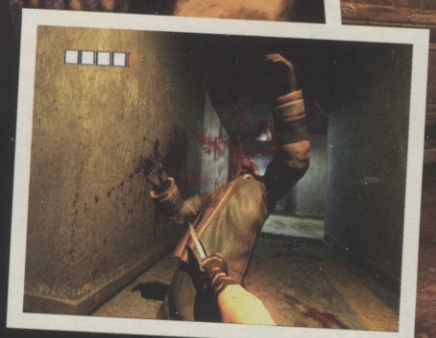
"PACKED WITH MASSIVELY OVER-THE-TOP FIREFIGHTS AND ONE HELL OF AN ESCAPE SCENE!"



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the team

WHO'S ROLLIN' DEEP WITH THE CVG UNIT THIS MONTH:

Pete Walker **Managing Editor**
Big Pete is kickin' it in the crib after becoming the Pimp Daddy – again! All our congratulations dawg!

Mike Cooper **News Editor**
Coop Doggy Dogg's been popping slugs in the reviews and previews this ish. He's the shizzle fo' rizzle

Graeme Boyd **Staff Writer**
Q-Boyd pimped his ride and rolled the streets smokin' endo, sippin' on NFSU2 and Juiced (beeyatch)

Alex Simmons **Editor**
Eazy-A's keeping the streets locked down by patrolling the 'hood on foot: his scooter stopped working

Paul Davies **Contributing Ed**
Get P Diddy on the court and he's trouble: last week he messed around and previewed NBA Ballers

Kris Barratt **Senior Designer**
Kris Kros is going to give up his band to form a hardcore gangsta rap crew called the Barratt Homies

Jaime Smith **Art Editor**
Dr J went old school on our ass and tried to design the mag with spray-paints. Stick to computers, homes

Steve O **Production Editor**
What does Hagan-Dazs say? "F*** the police!" Homie hates po-po but he's damn good with words, yo

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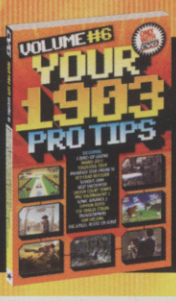
100% COMPLETE GUIDES TO THE BEST GAMES

DRIV3R
- Every mission, every city, every secret: Driv3r uncovered!

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW
- 100% super-spy intel on the PS2 version of the stealth champ



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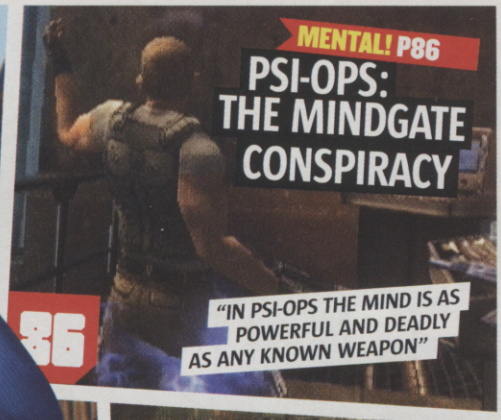

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CHECK THE WORD ON THE GAMING STREET

Here at CVG we've got contacts all over the 'hood so we can hook you up with the hottest gaming news. Pop the page for the DL

planet cvg

HOT NEWS & GAMING GOSSIP FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

RIGHT OFF THE RICHTER SCALE

Since we're all getting excited about GTA: San Andreas (check out our feature on page 22) I've been thinking about earthquakes a lot. Why? San Andreas is a nasty little faultline that runs right through California.

It's a bit like news lately. After the Big One shook the crap out of the LA Convention Centre at E3, we've had lots of little news quakes, but now you can feel the full-on seismic explosions brewing.

Take Pro Evo 4, the football game that's so far ahead of the competition it's gouged out a Grand Canyon-sized lead.

And Halo 2. If any game's going to shake the gaming world to its foundations it's Bungie's badass little baby.

But watch out for aftershocks: we've got new info on Tekken 5, TimeSplitters: Future Perfect, and WWE SmackDown! vs RAW!

So get under a table, watch out for falling masonry, and feel Planet CVG quake!

Graeme Boyd

Graeme Boyd *News Hound*

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Face-breaking new shots from the beastly new brawler

08 GOTHAM 2 ADD-ON
Dude! Take a test drive around PGR2's Cali expansion pack

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New screens of EA's time-travelling shooter

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New screens and info on the greatest grappler yet

ON PS2, PC AND XBOX!

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4

LACE UP YOUR BOOTS FOR THE START OF THE PES4 FOOTIE SEASON!

Football, football, football. It's all we ever hear about. First Euro 2004, then the Premiership, Coca-Cola Championship, then Konami fizzes a stadium-full of Pro Evo 4 shots and official details at our faces.

It's bloody great, isn't it? Last month we brought you the scouting report on Winning Eleven 8, the Japanese version of Pro Evo, but these screens and info are from the British version due for release on PS2 and – get this – Xbox and PC in October! Sweet!

No news yet on stadiums, but this chicken wire effort looks alright

Looks good, eh? The visual detail has definitely been ramped up with the player likenesses looking better than ever. Kits will get dirty from sliding around and we've spotted some wimpy players wearing gloves.

But the really interesting detail is in how PES4 plays. More players will display individual moves and animations, and more advanced stats will determine how skilled they are at pulling off the vastly expanded trick list.

The dribbling system has been refined to give you more options when skinning defenders, and passing's been tweaked: you'll be able to guide the ball exactly where you want it to go, and at what speed.

Gloves are a nice touch – don't know why players from frosty Sweden and Denmark are wearing them

MESSIN' YOURSELF
That's not Del Piero getting a bit nervous about his kick: it's mud he's picked up from a sliding challenge. It's a small detail, but messy kits means beautiful realism.

FREAK KICKS
At last you can do clever free kicks with run-overs, layoffs and dummies. A little bar comes up when there's a dead ball situation, and lets you tweak your kick to net-bursting perfection.

PES4 is the closest you'll get to recreating that fateful night in Lisbon

WHO'S THE B*****D IN THE BLACK?

Well, green actually, but the answer is... the ref! There he is, running up and down the pitch and, if he's Swiss, ruining England's chance of European glory.

He'll always be in the right spot to make the right decision and stamp out any ruckus... or will he?

It's not only free kicks that have been enhanced – there's extra options for penalties too

Ref AI has been beefed up to put a stop to PES3's dodgy decisions

NEWS NUGGETS

UNMISSABLE BITE-SIZED STORIES FROM ALL OVER THE PLANET

OUTBREAK BREAKS OUT AGAIN

Biohazard Outbreak File #2 – the Japanese name for Resident Evil Outbreak 2 – has been given a September 9 release date in Japan. It's a continuation of the first game with new stages. No news on a UK release yet, but online play is actually looking likely this time.

FINAL FANTASY REBORN

Final Fantasy I and II are now available on GBA in Japan. You'll have to wait until November 14 to snatch the UK versions, but here are some teasing screens to get you ready to go old-skool FF-style.

RIDDICK HITS PC... AND PS2?

Vivendi's brutal stealth action shooter is confirmed for launch on PC, and speculation would nail it down to a November release. And Vin Diesel himself has suggested that a PS2 version may also be emerging from the dark, as suggested by our interview with Lars from developers Starbreeze Studio. Check it out on page 11.

BIG GAME FACE

We're astonished at how good some of the player faces look. Close up their overpaid nuggets are spot on, but even from a distance you can make out Puyol's pig-ugly Frankenstein face.

HOT SHOT

NICE MOVES

Capturing how players move and stand might seem like a little thing, but it's one of the reasons PES is so good. These players look even more natural so PES4 should move like a dream.

With the referee always on the scene you'll have to be extra careful with tackles

Skilled players will be able to control balls even in a crowd of players

CONTROL IT UP

The new and improved dribble system will let you flounce down the wing like poncey show-off Cristiano Ronaldo, or blast through the defence like demented bull-child Wayne Rooney – but it's your skill on the first touch that counts.

If Holland's getting 18 licensed teams, surely England should get loads?

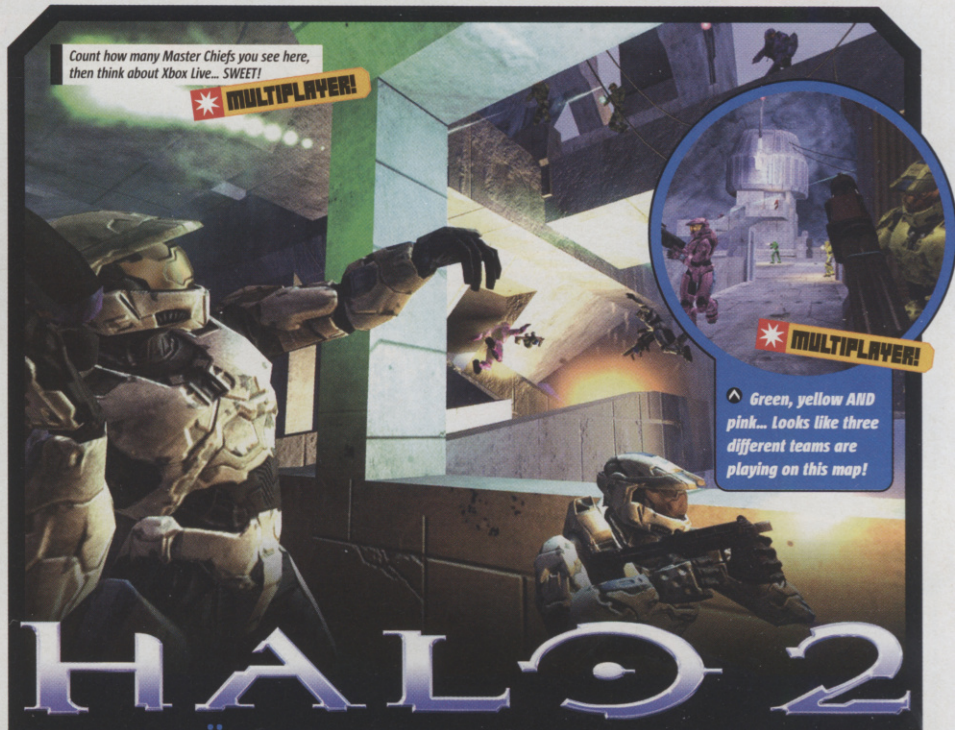
SIGN 'EM UP

While these kits aren't perfect, the names look spot on. Even better, Konami has promised licensed teams from England, Spain, Italy, England and France. A list of licensed Dutch squads in Winning Eleven 8 came in at 18 teams, so here's hoping for heaps more!

Dead ball situations will be more interesting, too. You'll be able to bust out fizzing free kicks by using complex new options for that straight-off-the-training-pitch feeling.

It's stuffed full of fat footballing genius like Wayne Rooney's England shirt. We'll never get enough football, but PES4 is definitely trying! ✷

Controlling players off the ball will let you link up cheeky kicks



Count how many Master Chiefs you see here, then think about Xbox Live... SWEET!

MULTIPLAYER!

MULTIPLAYER!

Green, yellow AND pink... Looks like three different teams are playing on this map!

HALO 2

BUNGIE'S ÜBER-SHOOTER RELEASE DATE SLIPS!

SINGLE-PLAYER

You'll be getting more up close and personal with Elites than ever before

It's the news you didn't want to hear: Halo 2's UK release date has slipped. You'll have to wait until November 11 to get your mitts on it, which is, um, two days after the original release date.

Woo-hoo! Not so bad, eh? Sure, it's an extra 48 hours we'll have to sit around twiddling our analogue sticks, but Bungie has been good enough to batter us with loads of ass-spanking new screens to keep us going.

These screens demonstrate both single-player and multiplayer game modes, so have a good gander and just imagine playing it. Go on, imagine... mmmm.

And if CVG was a crazy future magazine with moving pictures we'd be able to show you the 3D screenshot Bungie recently released. It actually shows a Warthog blowing up – in full 3D! Nip off to www.bungie.net and have a look this minute.

Every time we see a new screenshot Halo 2 looks a little bit more astonishing

We'll be bringing you news on the single-player mode soon

CLAIM A GAME

Sick of paying almost the price of a new game for exchanging videogames? ClaimAGame promises to change that. If you want to exchange games of the same value they'll only charge £6.50 to cover postage and handling. Check out www.claimagame.com.

THIS MONTH'S BEST RUMOUR

PS3 Outsells Xbox 2... allegedly. Experts reckon that by 2010, the PS3 will have sold 30 million units, with the Xbox 2 still trailing at ten million. And they're not even built!

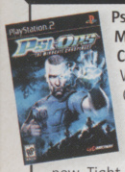
GET RETRO ON THE GO-GO

If you haven't got a GBA SP yet, sort yourself out with the new Classic NES edition. It looks like an old NES pad, and to go with it you can get eight classic games for £15 each! Leg-warmers optional.

Playtime Bullies

FIGHTING FOR SPACE ON CVG'S CONSOLES THIS MONTH

PS2 MOST PLAYED!



Psi-Ops: The Mindgate Conspiracy

We've played Psi-Ops so much that we know what you're thinking right now. Tight design, awesome physics, and the power to levitate stuff with your mind. Read our minds: do we like it?

XBOX MOST PLAYED!

Spider-Man 2

Finally, a licensed superhero game that isn't all steroid-enhanced visuals (*cough* Catwoman). The free-roaming city is massive and cool, swinging between skyscrapers feels exhilarating, and the crime-fighting is loads of fun.

CUBE MOST PLAYED!

Zelda: Four Swords

The US release of Four Swords has caused us to join GBA forces once again – and this time we can just about understand what's going on. When you're all working together it feels like nothing you've experienced before.

GBA MOST PLAYED!

Wario Ware Inc.

We keep waking up in the CVG games room drooling, with our arms gently but manfully clasped around each other. We don't know what happened, but we know Wario Ware's mental mini-games were responsible. Dammit!

PC MOST PLAYED!

Soldiers: Heroes Of World War II

Ground Control 2 last month, Soldiers this month? We're worried that we're turning into smelly RTS nerds. Still, at least we can blow up Nazis with one of the most intuitive and accessible control systems yet seen in an RTS, while we get stinkier and lose all our mates.

Since Paul has always been a popular choice one of the new characters is an 'Asian' Paul

The photo-realism of Tekken 4 will be replaced by anime style brawls with spectacular colours and effects

If you're an old hand at Tekken you'll be glad to know that the controls remain the same

TEKKEN 5

FIVE-KNUCKLED NEW SHOTS HITTING LIKE A PUNCH TO THE CHOPS

BOSH! Feel that? Have another one: BOSH! We're loving the punchy look of Tekken 5 so much we thought we'd swing these fresh new screens at your jaw. Here's another smack: Heihachi's dead. He got blown up by a new, improved Jack-5, and some Wesley Snipes lookalike called Raven is taking over as the big baddie.

Two other new characters are confirmed, too: Feng Wei, who fights like Paul, and Asuka Kazama, a thick-thighed lassie.

Sadly, there are no such huge revelations in gameplay, although the developers are keen to return to a much more free-flowing and exciting fighting style. Everything looks brighter, flashier, and more destructible. The aim is to keep a complex fighting system for experts but reward newbies with loads of pyrotechnics.

It's still arcade-only at the mo, but we'll bet our left nut that a PS2 version will be pumping iron in preparation for a release early next year. More info soon!

With the new, flashier visuals, pavement-breaking bodyslams look awesome – and hurt extra bad!

GOTHAM 2'S SON OF A BEACH

LONG BEACH EXPANSION PACK NOW AVAILABLE!

So you've powerslid every cobblestone in Edinburgh and every rumble strip in Sydney? Get your ass to the beach! Microsoft Game Studios has released the Long Beach Booster pack for PGR2, and it's even better than the Paris pack! Just £2.99 gets you eight sweet new motors, like the Ferrari 612 Scaglietti which can clock 196mph and Volkswagen's 800bhp beast of a supercar, the Nardo – together with eight new tracks to razz them around!

Set beneath the baking Californian sun, the tracks are perfect combinations of long straights and tight technical sections designed to get the most out of your Kudos-stacking skills. You'll be racing past Long Beach's, um, beach, around the world-famous aquarium, and passing lots of construction work. Which is weird, but still cool.

And it all works fine on Xbox Live, which is what you'll need to download it. At this rate we'll never stop thrashing Gotham!

The Dodge RAM SRT-10 sure ain't slow – it's capable of over 150mph!

The Radical SR3 Turbo is the current Nürburgring laptime record holder – that's DAMN fast!

The Ferrari 612 Scaglietti is the newest addition to the Italian stallion supercar stable

NEXT-GEN NEWS

THEY'RE ALL YEARS AWAY, BUT WE'RE GETTING EXCITED ALREADY...

PLAYSTATION PORTABLE (PSP)

■ Sony Computer Entertainment Inc (SCEI) has announced that 99 game developers from around the world are supporting PSP.

■ However, some developers in Japan have been grumbling about development costs and have concerns about battery lifespan (especially when playing movies) and the handheld's high price, rumoured to be around £350...

■ ...to which Sony replied that the battery life was as reported and the cost was nothing but speculation.

NINTENDO DS (PROJECT NITRO)

■ Japanese games mag bible Famitsu recently did a poll of 350 industry gurus, including games developers, to see whether they thought DS or PSP would be better. Here's a clue: the winner's got two screens...

PLAYSTATION 3 (PS3)

■ If you want one, you're gonna have to start saving now. High manufacturing costs have led analysts to believe that the launch price could be as much as $700 (£380). Ouch!

XBOX 2 (CODENAME: XENON)

■ A recent unofficial and unconfirmed leak gave us access to initial details of how powerful X2 could be:

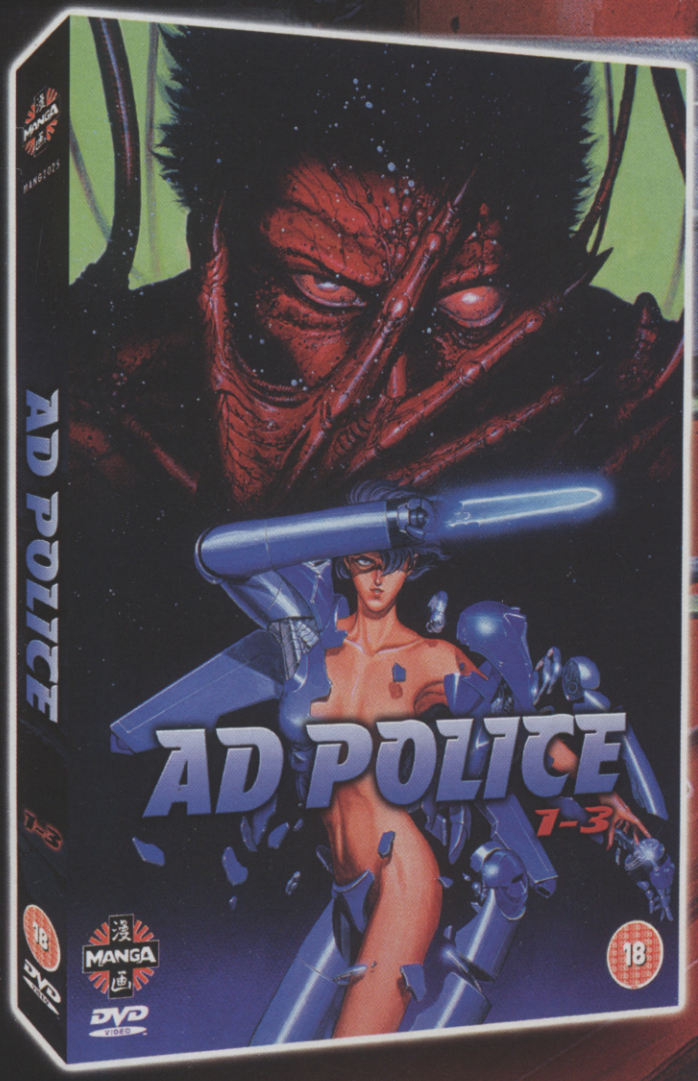
	XBOX	XBOX 2
PROCESSING POWER	766MHz Pentium 3	3.5GHz IBM
RAM MEMORY	64MB	256MB
MEMORY CARD STORAGE	8MB	64MB
GRAPHICS	250MHz nVIDIA	500MHz ATI

■ Square Enix, makers of the Final Fantasy series, is already considering developing games for Xbox 2. It promised this for Xbox as well, so we'll see if they stay true to their word.

AD POLICE

1-3

18



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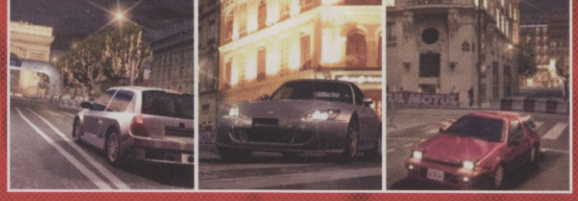
GT4 IS GAY... PARIS!

Crap jokes about Paris's sexuality done and dusted, those petrol-headed fellas at Polyphony Digital recently released more shots of the French capital. As you'd expect, some cars were involved too, but check this: the total number of motors is rumoured to be approaching 800! Beaucoup de wowzer!



Hot or Not?

RIDDICK

The game came from nowhere and dazzled us all with its brutal first-person battering and clever stealthy stuff. The film rocks too, and Vin Diesel is so cool we're honestly thinking about installing him as CVG's god.

SAN ANDREAS

With every new detail, San Andreas sounds less like a game and more like a life-swallowing, living, breathing, gangsta set-trippin' pimp daddy of an experience. Going on what we've seen and the GTA games that have come before, it could be better than ANYTHING you've ever seen.

SUPERHERO GAMES

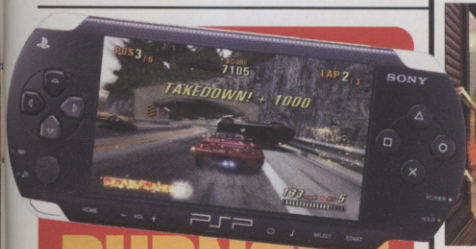
Just when we thought superhero games were about to live up to their ass-kicking potential with Spider-Man 2, Catwoman purrs up beside us looking all sexy then, to use Graeme's phrase, 'craps in our garden'.

PSP PROBLEMS?

Rumours from Japan suggest everything's not so rosy in the PSP garden, with fears being expressed about screen quality, unit price and development costs. Sony has denied any problems exist, but that didn't stop Jap mag Famitsu naming DS as their hand-held future favourite.

PSX

And Sony's other Great White Hope, despite looking cooler than a monkey in an ice cube, has been discontinued in Japan. We told you sales were slow in CVG 274 – now they're positively crawling, with Panasonic hammering Sony in the recordable DVD sector. Bye-bye to any UK release dreams.



BURNOUT SQUEALING ONTO PSP

HOT HANDHELD TO HOST HIGH-IMPACT CRASHES

After a whole lot of speculation and even more praying to the God of stupidly fast racing games (amen), Criterion Games have strongly hinted that Burnout is currently in development for PSP.

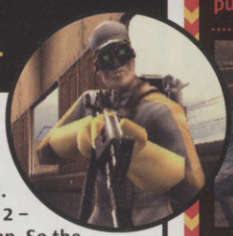
No details yet as to whether the game will be a remake or a whole new game, but the fact that Criterion reckon it can get the horsepower required shows the strength of PSP hardware.

And now that we've been caning Burnout 3 in the office we're even more excited. Verdict soon.

We like the look of this: shooting Bond-style baddies while balancing on top of a train

TimeSplitters FUTURE PERFECT™

THE FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT, THE FUTURE LOOKS PERFECT



You know a game's got a solid-gold multiplayer mode when you still can't stop playing it two years after it was released. Which is the case for us and TimeSplitters 2 – we're still hammering it through a multitap. So the news that Future Perfect will be fully online for both PS2 and Xbox has us squitting with joy.

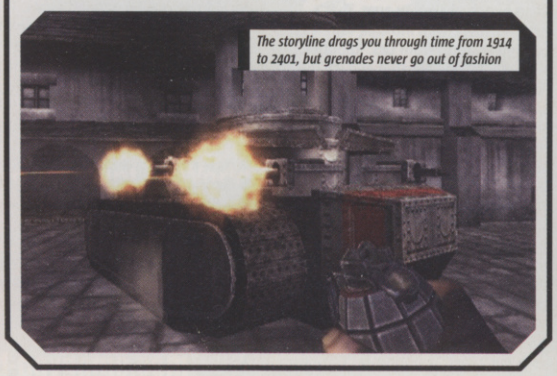
Future Perfect's new focus on big action sequences means more boss confrontations

Then these new screens landed on our messy desks, and even though they show excerpts from the single-player game, we no longer have any squits left. You can fly solo or play co-op over 11 missions that developer Free Radical has promised are much more action-packed than last time.

In a weird but cool twist you'll meet up with yourself, help yourself out, then have to repay yourself the favour later in the game. Headtrip, but a good one.

We'll have loads more information next month, but till then, enjoy the screens.

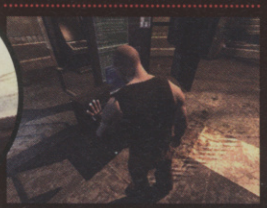
Co-op play should make the storyline mode loads more fun – online co-op maybe?



The storyline drags you through time from 1914 to 2401, but grenades never go out of fashion

the HOT SEAT

CVG goes Vin Diesel on Lars Johansson, producer at Starbreeze Studios, and pummels out all the info!



CVG: The Chronicles Of Riddick just seemed to creep up on us but we're hugely impressed with the quality of the game. Does that surprise you?

Lars: *We've come from nowhere! We've been working on the game for 20 months and it was never announced as a big thing. Then, suddenly everything exploded. It has been a very nice experience.*

CVG: Do you think you've surpassed everyone's expectations with the quality of the game?

Lars: *When we made our prototype we had every core gameplay feature in there, but we used old technology. The final version has an all-new engine, so it's definitely a huge step up. There are always things you want to do better, but I'm so happy that people enjoy the game.*

CVG: How do you think gamers will react to Riddick?

Lars: *I think they'll be stunned! The first thing you notice is how far we've pushed the visual technology and I'm so proud of how the game looks.*

CVG: What have you done with the hardware that hasn't been done before?

Lars: *We wanted to push the tech with our first Xbox game, Enclave, but the risk was too great. When we started Riddick we were keen to push things but it wasn't until we saw id's Doom 3 demos that we realised we could do something similar. It's been a big challenge, but we've not had huge problems – a tribute to the team.*

CVG: Why haven't other companies exploited the technology like you guys have?

Lars: *I think it's been a very bold move for us to push the tech in this way. We've got such a great bunch of technical guys here who've been able to do amazing things with the engine, rather than working around an engine we've had to license.*

CVG: We've heard rumours of a PS2 version in the works. Is this true?

Lars: *I can't say anything about that. What we have is an Xbox game, and I can't say anything about a PS2 version.*

"WHEN YOU START OFF IN RIDDICK YOU HAVE NOTHING"

CVG: Who do you see as Riddick's main competitors and how does Riddick stand out?

Lars: *I see Riddick as a hybrid. It has stealth, action, adventure, first-person shooting and melee combat. It sounds like a crazy mix but works very well for the character and the story. I think we're unique in the way we use the different aspects, but we admire Splinter Cell's stealth and Halo's shooting.*

CVG: How important is the stealth element to Riddick?

When you start in Riddick you have nothing. We wanted players to think about other methods to explore and investigate the prison rather than just shooting everything. And Riddick loves the dark, so stealth is very important to him as a character.

"RIDDICK REALLY KNOWS HOW TO TAKE OUT HIS ENEMIES"

CVG: Do you see the brutality of Riddick as a different approach to the stealthy kills in games like Splinter Cell?

Lars: *Riddick really knows how to take out enemies, so we've given the player lots of options, whether that's snapping necks, stabbing people, beating them to death, or grabbing their gun and blasting their heads off. Capturing Riddick's brutality was hugely important.*

CVG: What was Vin Diesel's involvement?

Lars: *He's a huge gamer and started his own games company called Tigon Studios. If there's someone who knows Riddick it's Vin Diesel, so he's offered a lot of stuff on what Riddick would do or say and has added his voice. He's also been playing the game at every stage and letting us know what he thinks.*

CVG: What about a sequel? Any news on that?

Lars: *We don't know anything about that at the moment – it all depends how well the game does. But we did something really good here, and I'm sure Riddick could carry off another game.* ✷

in Big Japan

THERE'S A CRISIS OF CONFIDENCE IN THE JAPANESE GAMES INDUSTRY, SAYS OUR MAN IN JAPAN

The big news in Japan right now is the reconsolidation of Sega into one single entity.

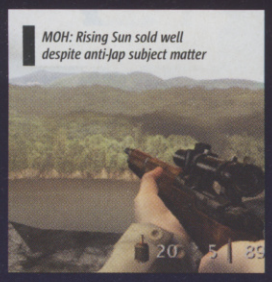
The individual studios that were spun out in the last days of Dreamcast – Sonic Team, Amusement Vision, United Gamé Artists and the like – are being drawn back in, and will again be known collectively as 'Sega'. Some people are suggesting this is a defensive move caused by falling game sales.

GTA wasn't expected to do well but shifted units

There's a kind of uncertainty gripping the Japanese game industry right now. The current generation of consoles is rapidly reaching its end and the next generation's more than a year away. The tried-and-tested ideas aren't doing it for gamers, and sales are down across all platforms. Everyone is looking for the next idea to make gaming exciting again.

There's a justified feeling that the good stuff is coming from the West. The torch of gaming innovation has been carried by Japanese developers for a long time, but now they're finding it a little hard to keep carrying it.

Pachinko machines are getting plastered with game characters



MOH: Rising Sun sold well despite anti-Jap subject matter

Where Western games typically don't sell well in Japan, Grand Theft Auto 3 recently sold 400,000 copies and Medal Of Honor: Rising Sun – where Japanese soldiers are the bad guys and killing them is encouraged – sold more than 200,000.

POT LUCK

Many games companies are turning to gambling machines to pay the bills until the way forward for games becomes clear. Sammy, who now owns most of Sega, is putting more of Sega's characters and games onto pachinko and slot machines.

Unlike Western countries where gambling has a sort of adults-only stigma, there's nothing to stop pachinko companies from making all manner of gambling hardware festooned with anime and game characters. SNK Playmore is another game company paying the near-term bills with Pachislo, and in fact most companies either produce or license their characters for Pachinko.

Konami's Dracula and Namco's Pac-Man have also seen Pachinko releases. You can expect this trend to pick up steam as the Japanese game scene continues to wonder what's next – let's hope they figure it out soon! **Lawrence**

WARHAMMER ONLINE CANNED

Warhammer fans, it's time to throw yourself on your bejewelled Sword of Sorrow – Warhammer Online is no more. Even though the MMORPG was looking well healthy, developers Climax and Games Workshop have cited high costs as the reason for the cancellation.

TOCA BLAZES ONTO PS

TOCA 2 was ace on Xbox so we're chuffed a PS2 version has been confirmed. There's a new track, a long championship mode and a Pro-Sim difficulty setting. It's out October.

COMING E3 2005!

HERE COMES PS3

SONY'S NEXT-GEN MONSTER PLAYABLE...

Yes it will be playable – but not until next E3. It's a whole nine months away, but the idea of getting our hands on Sony's new machine any time in the foreseeable future has got us properly moist.

In fact, we might not even have to wait that long. PlayStation genius Ken Kuturagi mentioned that he'd like to show PS3 off BEFORE E3 in a grand unveiling to selected VIPs. He dismissed reports that the machine's development wasn't going very well and confirmed that they'd have a playable version ready to rock next spring.

STOP PRESS

But we're not going to start packing up our PS2s just yet. While no mention was made about PS3's actual retail release date, it's still looking likely that 2006 will be the year you can go out and buy one. We'll keep you bang up to date with PS3, so start saving and keep it here for the lowdown.

Judging by this batch of screenshots there's gonna be a lot of jawing going on

Sweet, sweet online play could revolutionise the series

SMACKDOWN VS RAW

John Cena, Randy Orton, Triple H, Chris Benoit and Shawn Michaels: confirmed!

GET READY TO GRAPPLE THE GREASIEST WRESTLER EVER

Hello grapple fans! Here's what you've been waiting for – the first shots of THQ's lycra-stretching new WWE game. As the title suggests, SvR is bringing the two franchises together in a full-on train wreck of oiled-up man-flesh.

Okay, so these shots don't actually show a whole lot of action, but they do show the updated visual engine complete with more realistic facial animations and skeletal movements. THQ reckons this is the best-looking Smackdown! yet, and we think they might be right.

Ask them anything else, though, and they remain tight-lipped. Only a few superstars are confirmed at the moment, but the Legends should be making a return for some retro action.

The six-player mode has been brought back, but the thing that's got us really excited is the possibility of online play. THQ has suggested it's going to make an announcement that'll hit us like a dropkick, and it might well be online.

Check in next month for all the information and a whole load of new screenshots.

THQ has promised that SvR is going to look astonishing moving

KISS MY ASS, WIRES!

We love gaming online but all those wires strung throughout CVG's office are a bunch of sweaty arse. That's why we we're well into the Wireless Gaming Adapter from U.S. Robotics.

It's a bit complicated and we're not sure how it all works, but we plug a Wireless Gateway into the magical portal in the wall that lets us play online, then plug the Wireless Gaming Adapter into our Xbox or PS2. Then fairies – tiny fairies so small they're invisible to the eye – fly from the Gateway to the Adapter, carrying basketfulls of online game info. It works with multiple consoles too.

It's easy and it works, so we're not bothered about the science, but we're told it works with either 802.11g or 802.11b wireless routers. You can get both together in a bundle for £149.99.

EVEN MORE NINJA

NINJA GAIDEN DOWNLOAD MAKES PERFECTION

Not content with jamming the Long Beach booster pack down our broadband pipes, Tecmo is also hitting Ninja Gaiden fans with a new download.

It's more of a patch than an addition, which shows how dedicated the developers are to making Ryu the sharpest Demon slicer in the box. Released early August on Xbox Live, here's a taster of what you can expect:

- **New enemies: and they're MASSIVE!**
- **New weapons: three of the little buggers**
- **New bonuses: we've seen one cool new costume, but what else is in there?**
- **Improved AI: just in case you found it to easy**
- **New camera control: now you've got full control!**
- **New faster speed: yup... it's even faster**

This is a wonderful, wonderful thing. We'll bring you more news next month.

DOUBLE DAMAGE!

The size of some of the biggest baddies is incredible – and there's two of them!

THIS IS HARDCORE!

So it's harder, faster, and stuffed full of massive enemies? Can we even take it?

Digital Reality

Monte Cristo
www.montecristogames.com

12+
www.pegi.info

The way it's meant to be played
NVIDIA

PC CD

D-DAY

RE-LIVE THIS HISTORIC TURNING POINT!
NEVER FORGOTTEN

"London, Tuesday, June 6, 1944: Under command of General Eisenhower, Allied naval forces, supported by strong air forces, began landing Allied armies this morning on the northern coast of France."
First broadcast after the start of the Normandy Invasion.

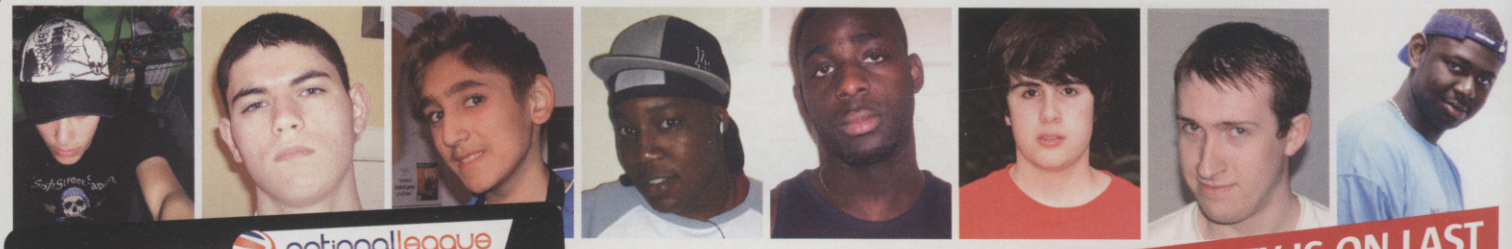
NORMANDIE 1944 La Mémoire 60ème ANNIVERSAIRE

D-Day the invasion, was THE turning point of World War II.

D-Day the game, perfectly recreates this turning point, as players plan and execute the turning points in the liberation of Europe: ***the first hours of the beach landing at Omaha Beach, the paratrooper attack on Sainte Mère Eglise, the taking of the Cherbourg harbour, operation Cobra, the battle of the Falaise pocket, and the liberation of Normandy in August 1944***. D-Day features footage from historical archives as well as interviews with D-Day veterans, blended seemlessly with stunning 3D graphics, immersive tactical gameplay, engaging multiplayer modes, and a fully supported map editor.

For more information visit: www.d-daygame.com

Officially endorsed by the 60th anniverary "Normandie Mémoire" association, D-Day is THE most authentic WWII RTS.



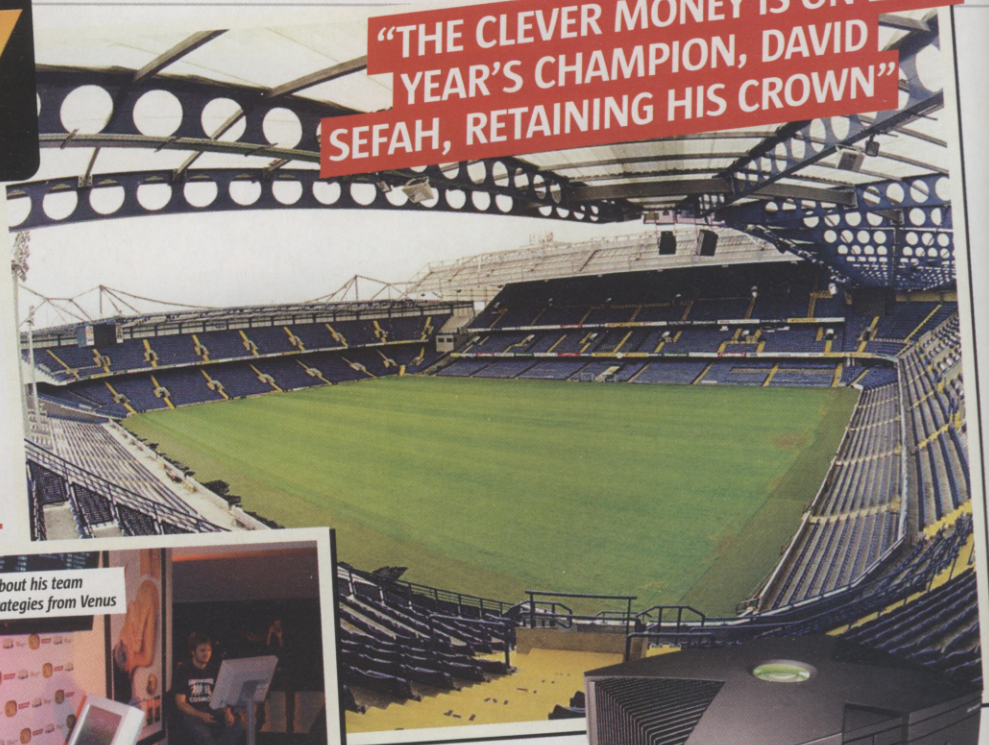
nationalleague PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

GAME CVG KONAMI

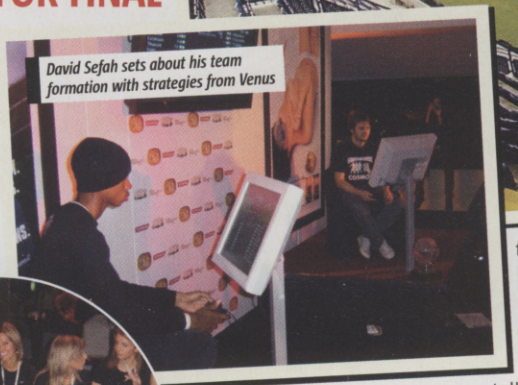
TAKE ME TO THE BRIDGE!

40 PES LEAGUE QUALIFIERS HEAD TO CHELSEA FC FOR FINAL

"THE CLEVER MONEY IS ON LAST YEAR'S CHAMPION, DAVID SEFAH, RETAINING HIS CROWN"



Staring at you from these pages are the UK's finest PES players, Los Galacticos of videogame football. They will all be heading to Stamford Bridge on August 7 to compete in this year's PESLeague Grand Finals. Join us as we wish them good luck, and give the rest of you a little bit of insight as to their chances.



David Sefah sets about his team formation with strategies from Venus

THE CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

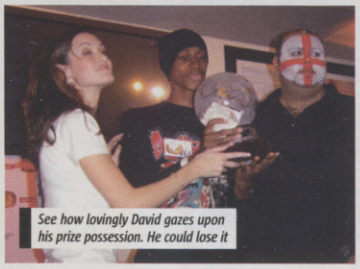
The 2003-2004 season kicked off last November and has been terrific in many ways. We added Newcastle to our list of official leagues, which has since gone on to be one of the largest and hotly contested.

We also introduced the North vs South Derby in May, held at Aston Villa Events Centre, which proved a phenomenal success thanks to non-league players being invited to take part. We gave away £1,000 worth of prizes that day, and a trip to the European Finals in September.

Girls are rubbish at PES, but they make for a damn good photograph

Of course the prizes we're expecting to hand out on August 7 will be far greater, so we're really looking forward to seeing the faces of the winners. There could be tears, there really could!

We were all so happy for David. Apart from the fat bloke, who was just hungry



See how lovingly David gazes upon his prize possession. He could lose it

AN XBOX FOR EVERY FINALIST

We can't reveal everything offered to the players in the Grand Finals, but we can confirm each one of the 40 finalists will receive an Xbox, thanks to Microsoft. And, when the day is done, every finalist will be invited out to dinner with Konami to find out all about what's in store for PES4!

SEFAH AIMS TO SURVIVE

In the end, the Grand Final will be about one man and his nerve to hang onto his precious trophy, silverware that could become as famous as the FA Cup! We're talking about reigning PESLeague Champion David Sefah from the London E4 league. His skills at PES are talked about far and wide across the land. All we can tell you is, yes, he really is that good. This guy handles a D-pad like Michael Schumacher handles an F1 car – the clever money is on him retaining his well-deserved crown.

It will take someone really special to take Sefah down, but the thought of how good such a challenger would have to be is almost too scary to contemplate...

AN XBOX FOR EVERY FINALIST!

To celebrate Pes4 coming to Xbox, Microsoft is giving an Xbox to each of the 40 finalists.

Awesome, but wait till next month and see the amazing stuff in store for our winner.

In the heat of last year's competition, a bystander is distracted by the topless chick

LONDON E4

Oz 'The Omen' Idris is by far the most confident, and from the evidence, most talented player from London E4.

All the players from E4 have the greatest possible sparring partner available in Mr Sefah, so look forward to a strong challenge from these lads.

OSMAN IDRIS
AGE: 19
Hometown: London
League: London
Team: France
P17 W14 D3 L0

SEAN OLIVER
AGE: 16
Hometown: London
League: London
Team: France
P20 W15 D3 L2

DAVID SEFAH
AGE: 16
Hometown: London
League: London
Team: France
P17 W15 D0 L2

BADE ADE
AGE: 21
Hometown: London
League: London
Team: Netherlands
P20 W14 D2 L4

NEWCASTLE

Tach Hamthanon was one of PESLeague's surprising latecomers – you'll notice how he trampled his way to the top slot without losing a match!

Everyone here plays a solid game and will be hard to break down, provided Jon Lee's luck holds up!

TACHAKON HAMTHANON
AGE: 22
Hometown: Newcastle
League: Newcastle
Team: France
P19 W16 D3 L0

MATT HOLMES
AGE: 17
Hometown: Crook
League: Newcastle
Team: Brazil
P20 W15 D2 L3

MARK RAFFIEE
AGE: 17
Hometown: Seaham
League: Newcastle
Team: France
P20 W14 D2 L4

JON LEE
AGE: 19
Hometown: Newcastle
League: Newcastle
Team: Brazil
P20 W12 D5 L3

EDINBURGH

Both Ian Wilson and Ross Forsyth are always likely to score, but clean sheets aren't so highly prized.

All four fellas from The Rock are likely to provide top entertainment, but we fear for their performances against some of the more defensive players.

STUART CRONIN
AGE: 16
Hometown: Midlothian
League: Edinburgh
Team: France
P20 W18 D1 L1

HO YAN CHEUNG
AGE: 19
Hometown: Dedridge
League: Edinburgh
Team: France
P20 W15 D4 L1

IAN WILSON
AGE: 20
Hometown: Kinellar
League: Edinburgh
Team: France
P20 W15 D2 L3

ROSS FORSYTH
AGE: 14
Hometown: Motherwell
League: Edinburgh
Team: Brazil
P20 W16 D1 L3

SOUTHEND

All these lads have equal chance of making the final itself. If you're looking for a Rooney in this tournament, look no further than Nic Padamsee.

The Crossman brothers will be practicing like crazy, and Tim Samme qualified with ease.

RICH CROSSMAN
AGE: 16
Hometown: Chelmsford
League: Southend
Team: Brazil
P18 W13 D2 L3

NICOLAS PADAMSEE
AGE: 13
Hometown: Brentwood
League: Southend
Team: Italy
P17 W12 D3 L2

TOM CROSSMAN
AGE: 19
Hometown: Chelmsford
League: Southend
Team: Netherlands
P17 W11 D4 L2

TIM SAMME
AGE: 17
Hometown: Romford
League: Southend
Team: France
P16 W12 D3 L1

BIRMINGHAM

There's very little to separate the talents of Birmingham's top four.

We know that it became something of a dogfight towards the close of the season, although Richard Marsh is recognised by everyone he knows as being the one to beat.

RICHARD MARSH
AGE: 19
Hometown: Dunstable
League: Birmingham
Team: England
P20 W16 D3 L1

DANNY LOUNDES
AGE: 21
Hometown: Walsall
League: Birmingham
Team: England
P20 W12 D6 L2

DWAINE PARKES
AGE: 18
Hometown: Birmingham
League: Birmingham
Team: Brazil
P19 W11 D6 L2

STEPHEN ROBINSON
AGE: 27
Hometown: Sutton Coldfield
League: Birmingham
Team: France
P20 W11 4D L5

LIVERPOOL

Liverpool is one of the leagues that suffered the shock of a talented latecomer rising through the ranks like a hot knife through butter.

Zahrin really put the wind up Shui Ip this season, coming from almost nowhere. A tight-knit pack with a strong will to win.

SHUI IP
AGE: 23
Hometown: Oldham
League: Liverpool
Team: France
P20 W18 D1 L1

ZAHRIN NADZIMUDDIN
AGE: 21
Hometown: Manchester
League: Liverpool
Team: Brazil
P19 W18 D0 L1

STEPHEN MINGHELLA
AGE: 23
Hometown: Liverpool
League: Liverpool
Team: Italy
P20 W16 D2 L2

AZHAN ANUAR
AGE: 23
Hometown: Manchester
League: Liverpool
Team: France
P20 W16 D2 L2

BATH

You'll notice that the guys here didn't play all their 20 allocated games. The reason for this is only because the Bath league is relatively small.

The Bath boys could well turn out to be the equivalent of Greece in 2004 – the surprising outsiders.

STEVE GODFREY
AGE: 16
Hometown: Taunton
League: Bath
Team: France
P15 W10 D2 L3

KEITH WHEELER
AGE: 24
Hometown: Bristol
League: Bath
Team: France
P16 W7 D4 L5

MIKE WHEELER
AGE: 22
Hometown: Bristol
League: Bath
Team: France
P15 W6 D5 L4

EMEKA MADDY
AGE: 18
Hometown: Bristol
League: Bath
Team: France
P9 W5 D2 L2

LONDON HARROW

You might not be surprised to learn that the Harrow crew are on friendly terms with London E4.

Femi Paul has long been recognised as this league's most consistent star player, but don't be fooled by Tim Adegboye's fourth place – he's hungry for it.

KHALID EL-AWEL
AGE: 19
Hometown: London
League: Harrow
Team: France
P20 W19 D0 L1

FEMI PAUL
AGE: 20
Hometown: London
League: Harrow
Team: France
P20 W17 D3 L0

ZESH SADIQUE
AGE: 25
Hometown: Reading
League: Harrow
Team: France
P20 W17 D2 L1

TIM ADEGBOYE
AGE: 18
Hometown: London
League: Harrow
Team: Argentina
P20 W15 D1 L4

CARDIFF

Jonathan Francis qualified early then had to wait for others to catch up.

This means he could be out of practice, but his confident start should be a warning. We view Cardiff as the other surprise package, and recommend Stephen Canty as the one to watch.

JONATHAN FRANCIS
AGE: 15
Hometown: Carmarthen
League: Cardiff
Team: France
P13 W11 D1 L1

STEPHEN CANTY
AGE: 26
Hometown: Enniscorthy
League: Cardiff
Team: Netherlands
P11 W8 D1 L2

DEBO AMUDA
AGE: 17
Hometown: Cilfynydd
League: Cardiff
Team: England
P16 W6 D2 L8

JOSEPH MCMULLEN
AGE: 15
Hometown: Canton
League: Cardiff
Team: England
P13 W5 D4 L4

STEVENAGE

This top four caught us by surprise to be honest, as our favourites were all knocked out in the closing stages.

Ferdenzi has shown consistent quality throughout the season however, so we guess we shall see on the day. We look forward to more surprises.

CHRISTOPHER OGIRRI
AGE: 20
Hometown: Cambridge
League: Stevenage
Team: France
P15 W12 D2 L1

JONATHAN FERDENZI
AGE: 17
Hometown: Welwyn
League: Stevenage
Team: France
P17 W10 D1 L6

VIVEK RUGHANI
AGE: 17
Hometown: Welwyn
League: Stevenage
Team: Argentina
P19 W9 D3 L7

JAMIE COTTAGE
AGE: 18
Hometown: Linton
League: Stevenage
Team: France
P14 W8 D5 L1

SEE YOU NEXT YEAR

We can confirm that PESLeague will be starting up again for a 2004-2005 season, most likely around November time.

Of course, the game in question will be PES4, so look forward to exclusive updates here in CVG!

Charts

UK TOP 20 BESTSELLERS

FIND OUT WHICH GAMES ARE FLYING OFF THE SHELVES AND WHICH ARE NOSE-DIVING INTO OBSCURITY, HOW THEY SCORED IN CVG AND WHAT WE RECKON TO THEM NOW

ChartTrack — The official UK weekly leisure software charts ©2002 ELSPA Ltd, compiled by ChartTrack, with the name ELSPA acting as a link to our website www.elspa.com

POSITION	MOVE	GAME	FORMAT/S	CVG SCORE	SUMMARY	LAST WEEK	WEEKS IN CHART
1	↑	SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW (UBISOFT)	PS2 XB PC GBA	94%	Sam takes his unique brand of shadow-stalking espionage to PS2 and creeps confidently into the top slot.	2	10
2	↑	HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZAKABAN (EA)	PS2 GC PC GBA	82%	Previous Potters have never been this dark or challenging. Plus the EyeToy mini-games add an extra touch of magic.	4	2
3	↑	UEFA EURO 2004 PORTUGAL (EA)	PS2 XB GC	79%	Even though we're proud supporters of Pro Evo there's no doubt that EA's footie titles are closing the quality gap every season.	4	2
4	↓	RED DEAD REVOLVER (ROCKSTAR)	PS2 XB	85%	Rockstar's Wild West gunslinger oozes attitude by the spittoon-ful. Whatever your poison, Red Dead's worth a quick shot.	3	2
5	NEW	SHREK 2 (ACTIVISION)	PS2 XB GC GBA	69%	Good movie + half-decent game spin-off + whiney kids pestering their parents in Woolies = impressive sales.	–	1
6	NEW	DRIV3R (ATARI)	PS2 XB	64%	There've been some bulls**t reviews doing the rounds, but last month CVG brought you the cold hard truth – it's the biggest disappointment in ages.	–	1
7	↓	MCAFEE INTERNET SECURITY (MCAFEE)	PC	–	After months of chucking its weight around the top 20, Norton gets blasted down the charts by McAfee's heavyweight online minder.	5	4
8	↓	THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS (EIDOS)	XB PC	89%	A refreshingly raw stealth alternative to the hi-tech sneak 'n' shoot antics of Splinter Cell or Metal Gear.	7	2
9	↓	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 – PLATINUM (KONAMI)	PS2 PC	95%	Konami's footie king literally offers you endless adrenalised entertainment, all for the meagre sum of £19.99! Bargain of the year.	8	15
10	NEW	MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR (NINTENDO)	GC	83%	This truly is golf at its craziest, quirkiest and most charming, with hazards like ball-pinching Piranha Plants!	–	1
11	↓	NORTON INTERNET SECURITY 2004 (NORTON)	PC	–	Norton ain't top dog no more! This month it's taken a whuppin' from the heavy hands of the mighty McAfee.	10	27
12	●	CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASON 03/04 (EIDOS)	PC	84%	This month our Graeme managed to take Aberdeen all the way to the Champions League final... and lost.	–	17
13	↓	HITMAN: CONTRACTS (EIDOS)	PS2 XB PC	78%	There are loads of ways to kill a man, and most of them are in Hitman: Contracts – like death by poisoned tattoo ink.	9	8
14	↓	THE SIMS – PLATINUM (EA)	PS2 XB PC	85%	A favourite among the ladies. Not that we're saying ALL females are controlling and manipulative. Only 99.9% of them.	13	51
15	↓	NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND – PLATINUM/XBOX (EA)	PS2 XB GC GBA	91%	Only upcoming racers like Burnout 3, Underground 2 and Midnight Club 3 can steal the thunder from EA's street racing classic.	6	29
16	→	GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY – PLATINUM (ROCKSTAR)	PS2 PC	–	Rockstar's epic rule-breaker nails a 69'er this month! Not that sort – 69 weeks on sale and still yanking in fresh fans.	16	69
17	↓	SONIC HEROES (SEGA)	PS2 XB GC	62%	Most of the time it feels like you're riding a dull roller coaster – out of control, on rails and utterly predictable.	15	20
18	↓	SINGSTAR (SONY)	PS2	81%	Pop a nut trying to hit the high notes just like Justin Hawkins from The Darkness in Sony's karaoke party starter.	14	5
19	●	FIFA 2004 (EA)	PS2 XB GBA PSONE	82%	EA's world-class striker chips back into the charts, but can't challenge PES3 in the rankings at almost double the price.	–	33
20	↓	GRAN TURISMO 4: PROLOGUE (SONY)	PS2	73%	Sony's stripped back version of the most wanted sim racer on PS2's horizon claws onto the bottom rung of the charts ladder.	11	4

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CVG'S MOST WANTED

1. GTA: SAN ANDREAS (PS2)
Mike: "Let me put this way: If I could only play one game for the rest of my life it would be this... or hide the sausage."

2. PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4 (PS2)
Paul: "More player-specific trademark tricks, improved set pieces and mud on your kit! Plus improved gameplay! But how?"

3. BURNOUT 3 (XB)
Graeme: "Face-obliterating crashes and speeds that feel like being dragged by the nuts from an F1 car with your sack set to ping at any moment. Greatest arcade racer EVER!"

4. HALO 2 (XB)
Alex: "The single-player Campaign promises to be the most epic, free-form and intense battle of all time. Gimme some of that!"

5. STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT (XB, PC, PS2)
Pete: "Battlefield meets Star Wars with Storm Troopers and jetpacks! From what we've seen so far, online multiplayer conflicts will be totally epic."

READERS' MOST WANTED

John Talylor genuinely believes that FIFA 2004 is better than PES3. He also thinks that Nadia from Big Brother is the fittest 'girl' in the house.

1. TEKKEN 5 (PS2)
"That new character Jack-5 looks ultra hard. I'm gonna master him!"

2. GRAN TURISMO 4 (PS2)
"When I saw the Costa di Amalfi track in your E3 feature I actually squeaked."

3. FIFA 2005 (PS2)
"I hate all the fake teams in Pro Evo. FIFA never lets me down."

4. METAL GEAR SOLID 3 (PS2)
"The new camo system seems amazing. I love the crocodile hat thing!"

5. RESIDENT EVIL 4 (GC)
"I'm going to buy a GameCube just to play this. It looks unbelievable."

Send us a photo of yourself and a list of the five games you're most excited about with 15 words on each explaining why.
Readers' Most Wanted, CVG, Dennis Publishing Ltd, 9 Dallington Street, London EC1V 0BQ. Email: mailbag.cvg @dennis.co.uk (subject: Most Wanted)

PACMANHATTAN

New York University's Interactive Telecommunications department has invented a real-life urban version of Pac-Man where one person (dressed as Pac-Man) runs through the streets of a fixed area of Manhattan collecting virtual pills pursued by three people dressed as ghosts. The fella playing Pac-Man uses a Wi-Fi phone so that his nerdy buddies can track him.

EXTRA NINJA GAIDEN CONTENT

Tecmo has announced an update for Ninja Gaiden for download via Xbox Live in August. There'll be wicked new weapons, new enemies and bosses to battle, plus the actual in-game fighting engine has been tweaked to ramp up the speed of the action.

THIS MONTH'S BEST RUMOUR

A leaked piece of concept artwork from Command & Conquer 3 appeared on the Internet this week, suggesting that the game is currently in the full throws of development. More as it breaks!

RELEASE DATES

CVG BRINGS YOU THE ULTIMATE CUT-OUT-AND-KEEP RELEASE SCHEDULE. MARK UP YOUR FAVES AND KEEP THIS LIST ON YOU AT ALL TIMES...

JULY 2004

			I WANT IT
PC	ALPHA BLACK ZERO	30 JULY	☐
GBA	DEFENDER OF THE CROWN	30 JULY	☐
PC	ULTIMATE TRAFFIC	30 JULY	☐
GBA	WINGS ADVANCE	30 JULY	☐
PS2	WORLD WAR ZERO	30 JULY	☐
GC	CATWOMAN	30 JULY	☐

AUGUST 2004

			I WANT IT
PC	SHERLOCK HOLMES	01 AUGUST	☐
PS2	CATWOMAN	06 AUGUST	☐
XB	CATWOMAN	06 AUGUST	☐
GBA	CATWOMAN	06 AUGUST	☐
PC	CATWOMAN	06 AUGUST	☐
XB	THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK	13 AUGUST	☐
XB	RAINBOW SIX 3: BLACK ARROW	20 AUGUST	☐
PC	CRUSADER KINGS	27 AUGUST	☐
PC	AIRBORNE TROOPS	27 AUGUST	☐
GBA	DIGIMON BATTLE SPIRITS 2	27 AUGUST	☐
GBA	DRAGON BALL Z: SUPERSONIC WARRIORS	27 AUGUST	☐
PC	EVERQUEST II	27 AUGUST	☐
PS2	EYETOY: CHAT	27 AUGUST	☐
XB	VULTURES	27 AUGUST	☐
PC	SEA OF EVIL	27 AUGUST	☐
PS2	HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	27AUGUST	☐
XB	HEADHUNTER: REDEMPTION	27 AUGUST	☐
XB	SUDEKI	27 AUGUST	☐

SEPTEMBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PS2	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	FLATOUT	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	TERMINATOR 3: REDEMPTION	01 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	JUICED	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	ARMIES OF EXIGO	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 4 BLUE MOON	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MEGAMAN BATTLE NETWORK 4 RED SUN	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MEGAMAN ZERO 3	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	THE ROOTS	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	RICHARD BURNS RALLY	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	NHL 2005	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	WARIO WARE INC. MEGA PARTY GAMES	03 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	MYST 4: REVELATION	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	BURNOUT 3: TAKEDOWN	10 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	CREATURE CLAN	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	MARIO GOLF: ADVANCE TOUR	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	CONFLICT: VIETNAM	17SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	KNIGHTS OF HONOUR	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	PSI-OPS	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	PSI-OPS	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	THE SIMS 2	17 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	ANIMAL CROSSING	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	CODENAME PANZERS	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	GULF WARS	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL	24 SEPTEMBER	☐

LOOKS TASTY ENOUGH TO SATISFY YOUR PUSSY LUST INITIALLY, BUT SOONER OR LATER IT'LL CRAP IN YOUR GARDEN

ROCKSTAR'S TAKEN EPIC FREEDOM TO THE EXTREME FOR WHAT'S SHAPING UP TO BE THE GAME OF 2004

HOT PICKS

KEEP AN EYE OUT FOR THESE SIZZLING NEWCOMERS IN YOUR LOCAL GAMES SHACK

HARDCORE STREET RACER FOR REAL BOY RACERS – IT'S IN-DEPTH, BUT IS IT ACCESSIBLE ENOUGH FOR THE NFS PACK?

IT'S THE REASON GAMECUBE HAS FOUR HOLES IN THE FRONT AND THE REASON WHY YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH

WAIT UNTIL YOU PLAY IT – TELEKINISIS ALONE GAVE US SOME OF OUR FAVE GAMING MOMENTS OF THE YEAR SO FAR

XB	NEIGHBOURS FROM HELL	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	RESIDENT EVIL OUTBREAK	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	MEDAL OF HONOR: PACIFIC ASSAULT	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	PILOT DOWN	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	SILENT HUNTER 3	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	SPECNAZ	24 SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	ROME: TOTAL WAR	SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	BOKTAI 2	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	CRISIS ZONE	SEPTEMBER	☐
PS2	DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK	SEPTEMBER	☐
XB	DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	DEF JAM FIGHT FOR NEW YORK	SEPTEMBER	☐
PC	S.T.A.L.K.E.R	SEPTEMBER	☐
GC	WWE DAY OF RECKONING	SEPTEMBER	☐
GBA	FINDING NEMO: THE CONTINUING ADVENTURES	SEPTEMBER	☐

OCTOBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PC	FORD RACING 3	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	MEDIEVAL LORDS	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	MOMENTS OF SILENCE	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	STARSKY & HUTCH 2	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	STARSKY & HUTCH 2	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	KNIGHT RIDER	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	MIAMI VICE	01 OCTOBER	☐
GBA	POKEMON FIRE RED	01 OCTOBER	☐
GBA	POKEMON LEAF GREEN	01 OCTOBER	☐
PC	SHADE: WRATH OF ANGELS	01 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	AQUANOX	08 OCTOBER	☐
XB	AQUANOX	08 OCTOBER	☐
GC	DONKEY KONGA	15 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	GRAND THEFT AUTO: SAN ANDREAS	22 OCTOBER	☐
PC	WARTIME COMMAND	23 OCTOBER	☐
PC	COSSACKS 2	29 OCTOBER	☐
PC	SNIPER ELITE	29 OCTOBER	☐
PS2	100 BULLETS	OCTOBER	☐
XB	100 BULLETS	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OCTOBER	☐
PC	PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 4	OCTOBER	☐
PS2	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
XB	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
GC	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PC	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
PS	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
GBA	FIFA 2005	OCTOBER	☐
GBA	BANJO PILOT	OCTOBER	☐
GBA	LEGO KNIGHTS' KINGDOM	OCTOBER	☐

NOVEMBER 2004

			I WANT IT
PS2	MORTAL KOMBAT DECEPTION	05 NOVEMBER	☐
XB	MORTAL KOMBAT DECEPTION	05 NOVEMBER	☐
PS2	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2	05 NOVEMBER	☐
XB	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2	05 NOVEMBER	☐
GC	TONY HAWK UNDERGROUND 2	05 NOVEMBER	☐
XB	HALO 2	09 NOVEMBER	☐
GC	PIKMIN 2	09 NOVEMBER	☐
XB	STILL LIFE	26 NOVEMBER	☐
PS2	MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	NOVEMBER	☐
XB	MIDNIGHT CLUB 3: DUB EDITION	NOVEMBER	☐
PS2	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	☐
GC	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	☐
XB	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	☐
GBA	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	☐
PC	THE INCREDIBLES	NOVEMBER	☐
PS2	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	☐
XB	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	☐
GBA	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	☐
PC	HOT WHEELS: STUNT TRACK CHALLENGE	NOVEMBER	☐
PS2	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	☐
GC	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	☐
GBA	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	☐
PC	THE POLAR EXPRESS	NOVEMBER	☐

RELEASE DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE

Ed Zed's House Of Pain

CVG's Challenge Champion is here to kick YOUR ass!

FARAZ 'THE MAN' ALAM
"CAN WE PLAY FOR SHOTS?"

MIKAEL 'DISCO FUDGE' SUOMINEN
"I WILL WIN!"

PETE 'FUNKMEISTER' BARAN
"AGH! TURTLES!"

MINI-GAME MADNESS!

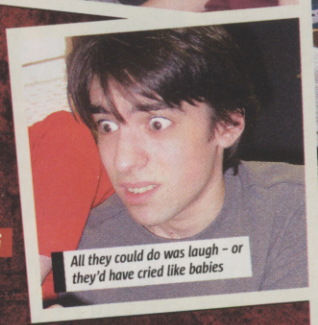
This game is mental. Intense mini-game craziness that even we haven't worked out – but holy moleys it's fun! Best of five rounds wins.

NO MORE CHALLENGE MELTDOWNS

That's it – no more lost challenges. We're not pointing fingers, or naming names, but it's all Graeme's fault. So late one night Team CVG fuelled up on bacon crisps and combined their videogame skills to create the ultimate gaming machine.

Here he is, blood pumping through his joypad-wire veins, fingers of steel clasping the controller, ready to destroy all in his wake. He is Ed Zed. Fear him. Oh, go on, fear him.

And since Ed Zed is the ultimate twitch-gaming machine, we reckoned Wario Ware Inc: Mega Party Games was the perfect way to demonstrate his skills. Let the bishi-bashing begin!



The challengers, Faz, Pete, and Mik stepped up. "It's pretty simple," said a ballsy Mik. **"We've all read CVG, we've all seen Graeme get his arse handed to him. This is gonna be easy!"**

But at that the doors to the CVG Games Bunker swung open, smoke swirled, heavenly lights flashed and Ed Zed strode in like a joypad-grasping Colossus. It's on!

ROUND 1: DANCE FEVER!

"WHAT DO I DO?" screamed Faraz, as he lost two of his lives to a mis-putt and a ninja kick. The boys were in tatters, battling against spaceships and fighting sharks, desperately trying to make head or tail of what was going on. Faraz fell arse over tit as he fumbled a baseball, Pete whined as he got lost in a ballerina's maze, and Mikael made a schoolboy error by not putting the cat to sleep correctly. Ed sat like a gaming ninja, eyes focused on screen, motionless, moving only to kick ass and win the round.

Ed 1, Challengers 0

ROUND 2: OUTTA MY WAY!

As the boys began to try and block Ed's movement as best they could – both on screen and off – he wowed them with his superhuman foresight and pneumatic button bashing. "Dear God," yelled Pete. "How do we stop this nightmarish gaming monster?"

You can't stop Ed Zed. Out of the 15 mini-games Ed played – catching swords, balancing plates, you know, that sort of thing – he scored 12.

The boys got a measly 8 each. Shucks, you suck.

Ed 2, Challengers 0

ROUND 3: BALLOON BANG

The boys managed a breakthrough, tactically out-classing Ed with carefully timed balloon blowing, taking down the champ, dancing like small pixies and squealing like badgers in triumph. "In your FACE!" spat Pete. Ed looked cold and focused like a dog about to crimp off an evil turd of revenge.

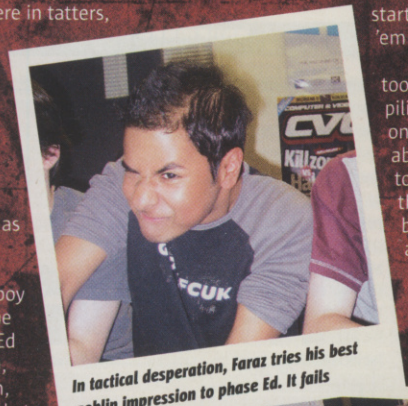
Ed 2, Challengers 1

ROUND 4: WOBBLY BOBBLY

To win this round you have to keep your turtles balanced. Sounds simple eh? Not when your opponents start lobbing tons of 'em at you!

Mik and Faraz took an early lead, piling the pressure on Ed, complaining about how it was all too easy. It was then that the gears began to whirr, and Ed hit them hard and fast with a flurry of inspired mini-game mastery. "He's cheating!" cried Faz as Ed swum a length of a pool, captured an alien, and then unbalanced all three of the lads in one fell swoop. They didn't stand a chance. Turtle heads all round.

Ed 3, Challengers 1



ROUND 5: MILKY WAY DELIRIUM

"Ha ha, tactics," said Mik, rubbing his hands together. Somewhat of a tactical genius, he picked his games well, and managed to steal most of Ed's spaces on the board. Faraz and Pete followed his lead, and Ed seemed almost beaten. But Mik was thwarted by a textbook error: not sniffing up a stringy bogey in time. Ed's robotic precision had blocked so much of the screen, Mik had no idea what he was doing. It was all over. The final score?

Ed 4, Challengers 1

LOSERS ONE AND ALL

Three against one, and they couldn't touch him. The gaming whirlwind lined 'em up and knocked 'em down.

He never lost control, and he was never going to lose; their doom was certain. They didn't have a chance – and you don't either. Or do you? Fill out the form, and see if you've got what it takes. We doubt it.

SPANK OUR GAMES GIMP

We've rubbed Ed with chip fat, squeezed him back into his gimp suit, and stuck him in the House of Pain (the games room cupboard). He's a good boy.

But soon we'll be freeing him from his sweaty latex prison and unleashing him on another set of challengers. There'll be prizes up for grabs for those brave enough to spank Ed's arse at next month's game, Red Dead Revolver! Sign up!

REMEMBER YOU'VE GOT TO BE IN IT TO WIN IT!

★HELLO, MY NAME IS: ..... [nickname] [age]

★BUT YOU MUST CALL ME ..... ★AND I'M ..... [game name]

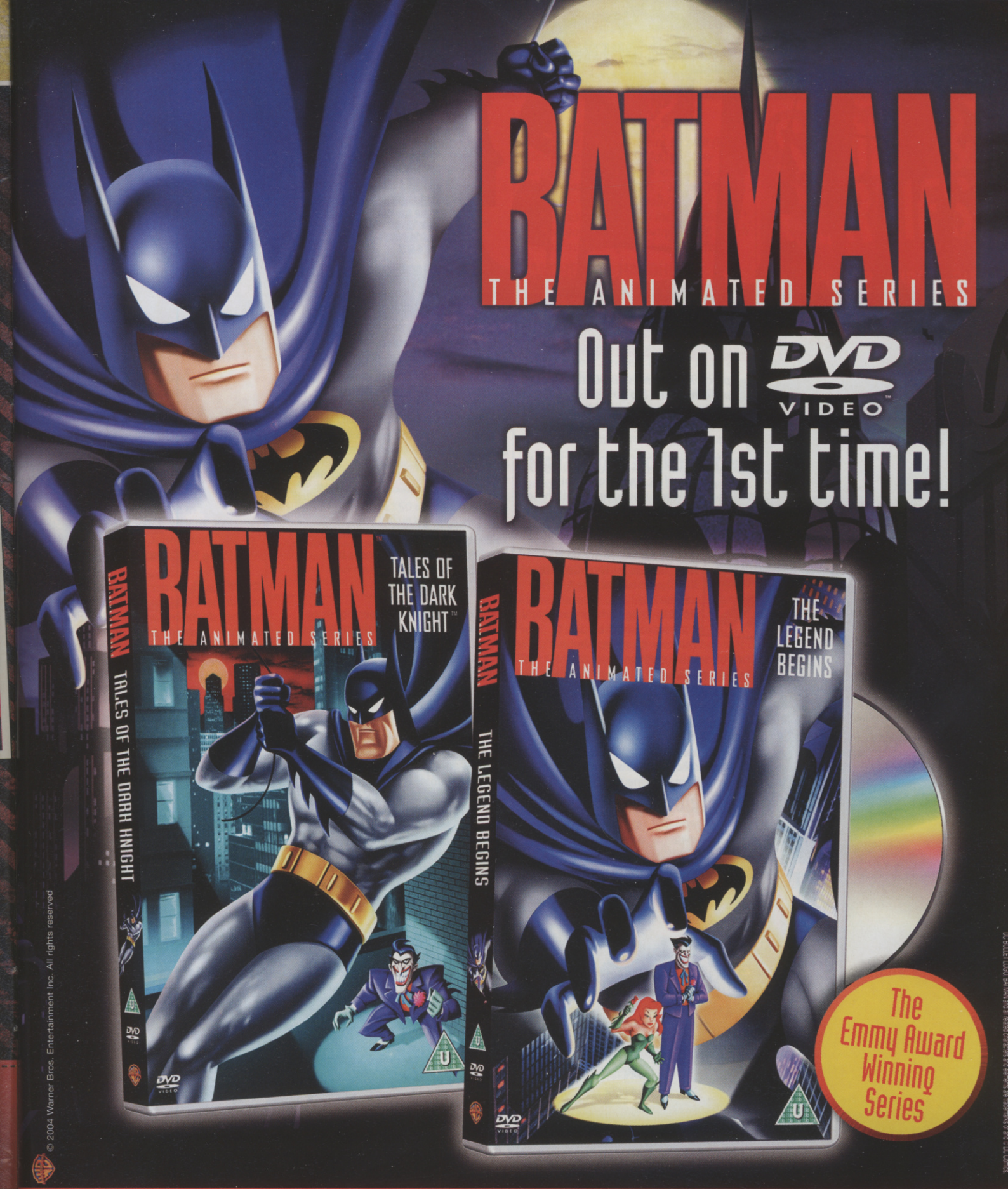
★I AM THE BEST AT: .....

★MY ADDRESS IS: .....

★DAYTIME TELEPHONE NO: ..... ★EVENING TELEPHONE NO: .....

★EMAIL: .....

Send to: CVG Reader Challenge, CVG magazine, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street. London, EC1v 0BQ



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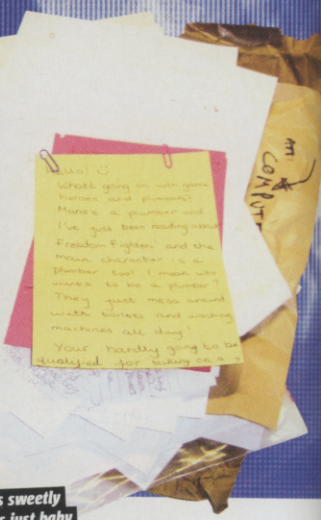


You could win £150 for speaking crap! Send your thoughts to:
Mailbag, CVG, Dennis Publishing, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 9BQ

It's going to look like this, but what's the official name going to be?

XBOX MARKS THE SPOT

Has anyone noticed that the Xbox has left the competition standing lately? Just look at last issue's Big 50: two of the highlights are Xbox games, Halo got a Diamond award and both Ninja Gaiden and PGR2 got 93 per cent. I'm not saying that other formats don't have gems but lately they haven't been producing.

Conor, via email

CVG *Xbox is busting out some quality stuff lately. Check the proof: Xbox games accounted for 29 per cent of the Big 50 last issue, ahead of PS2 at 27 per cent and Cube at 22 per cent. Is this the beginning of Microsoft's console domination?*

THE CONSOLE WITH NO NAME

I saw that news story about Nintendo trademarking all those acronyms in last issue and it got me thinking. I don't think Microsoft should settle for Xbox 2. Here's a few of my ideas:

NGX: Stands for Next-Gen Xbox.

XX: The first Xbox was X – this can be XX.

MSX II: Imagine how cool that'd look on top of the box?

Whatever it's called I hope it's a tiny bit smaller this time!

James, Dronfield

CVG *We like X2 – it's simple, looks cool, and sounds like a nuclear missile or something. XX is good though, and XXX would be amazing when Xbox 3 comes around. And we quite like how big Xbox is: we've all developed superhuman strength from carrying them home.*

CUBE 4 KIDS?

When I first saw GameCube I was eager to get one. As soon as I did I was disappointed. Cube is crap! Nintendo seem to revolve around making games for four-year-olds, and they don't even make that many. They're so kiddie they should come bundled with a dummy and a box of nappies!

Anon, Nottingham

Why are so many developers ignoring Nintendo? As a parent I admire Nintendo's efforts to produce family games. Just because they don't promote gore and violence doesn't mean sales should suffer. I don't think the games industry is growing up: I just think it's getting more shocking. I hope Nintendo don't have to put a gun in Mario's hand and spill blood on Mushroom Kingdom's streets to survive.

Stuart, Aberdare

CVG *The point is that people want different things from their console. Cube doesn't cater for everyone as well as PS2 and Xbox, and that's why it's suffering. Things are changing, though: if you left the kiddies alone with Resi 4 they'd turn into SCREAMING MENTALISTS. And Stuart, sorry mate, but Mario going on a killing spree actually sounds awesome. Make it happen, Ninty.*

DIRTY ZELDA LOVE

The new Zelda looks amazing and it's about time too. Okay, The Wind Waker had a good story but we need less cartoony visuals and more violence. Looks like Nintendo will deliver once again!

Richard, London

Every screenshot from the new Cube Zelda game has made me such a happy person, but every time I try to share this joy with others they just laugh at me.

It's a shame but Zelda will never be as cool as sports games or bloody, killing games – even with a darker makeover.

The danger is publishers will ignore Cube since they don't want to hurt their street cred. Let's face it, fat plumbers and fairy boys just aren't cool.

Captain Voodoo, email

Are Nintendo's sweetly pretty games just baby pants? Jury's out

This feels like calling my mother a slag but I think they should hold off the new-look Zelda until the next-gen Cube. Already I feel bad for saying it, but I'm so excited about it I want it to look as cool as possible. Still looks mint, though!

Slag Features, via email

CVG *Never a truer word was spoken: fat plumbers and fairy boys AREN'T cool, but they do make damn good games. Hardcore Nintendo fans know that but maybe Cube needs more violent games to please everybody. By the way, Slag Features, we talked to your mum and she's really pissed off. She's hot, though.*

WAR'S THE PROBLEM?

I agree that games have the potential to portray the

Link's grown up and got meaner, but he's still a fairy boy

"IT'S A SHAME BUT FAT PLUMBERS AND FAIRY BO JUST AREN'T COOL"

CVG STINKER

CHOICE IS A BAD THING

What is the point of racing games like WRC, Colin McRae and Gran Turismo? I don't get it. Why do people get excited about games that are exactly the same as the ones before? And Need For Speed Underground and Juiced: what's the f***ing difference? I hate games that try to copy others, like True Crime copying Vice City but being crap!

El Tof

CVG *You're right. Variety is NOT the spice of life. From now on there will only be one game of each type to stop people like you getting confused. If anyone brings out a game that is similar IN ANY WAY we'll instantly burn it, just like we'll burn any letter that's even CLOSE to being as stupid as yours.*

Racing games: they're all the same in't they? And I am a fool

TEXT 2 B HEARD

TEXT YOUR MAIL TO: 83125

How to enter: first type 'CVG MAIL' and then enter your message! Keep it short, keep it sweet, and make your point real quick!

TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

HARDCORE GAMES AIN'T S**T TO ME!

Will everyone stop moaning about how tough Ninja Gaiden is! I hope that all games in the future will be as hard as this. I'm sick of spending 40 quid on a game just to finish it in two days. If you want developers to produce good games that offer value for money, stick with difficult games – don't give up on level two like a spineless wimp!

Adam, Cheshire

CVG *Paying £40-plus for six hours of gameplay is a bunch of arse, so we do admire Ninja Gaiden's tough-as-bricks challenge. How about pricing games according to how many hours of gameplay you get from them?*

WIN £150!

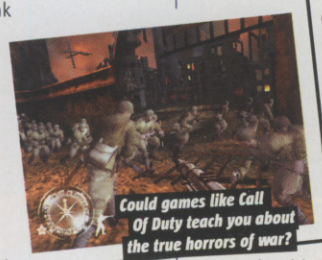
WINNER

See that bit? Adam thought it was well easy

■ Star Letter-writers win £150 to spend at CeX. CeX is the place to trade in your old games, DVDs and consoles for new ones, or sell them for unbeatable cash pay-outs. With games starting from £3, the winner could get 50 games! Check out www.cex.co.uk for more information.

horrors of conflict, but I don't think that potential is being realised. Players don't see someone get blown up and think "Christ, that really just happened and my mate's dead," they think "Wow, look at them fly!" I still think films are far more effective at realistically portraying the visceral nature of combat.

Daniel, via email



Could games like Call Of Duty teach you about the true horrors of war?

After watching the recent D-Day celebrations, I figured there was no better way to pay tribute to those brave men than sticking on Medal Of Honor: Frontline and kicking some Nazi ass! Once I finished the Omaha Beach level, though, I felt really disappointed by how shallow the game actually is. Where's the horrific agony of death? Good war movies instil a sense of respect for those who endured the horrors of war. If games could do this they may begin to take on a more serious and educational role in society.

Anon

CVG *Spot on, guys. While movies like The Thin Red Line and Saving Private Ryan communicate the full terror of war, most games still haven't risen above the old 'shoot the bad guys and be the hero' idea. Imagine an interactive depiction of war so powerful that you played it in history lessons to give you a better impression of how much we owe these men? History in action, and an excuse to play games in school. Woop woop!*

THE GIRL GAMER DEBATE IS DEAD...

I can't believe the debate about girl gamers is still going on. Female gamers shouldn't have to justify their existence. Do we really have to prove that we're A) attractive; B) heterosexual; C) actually good at playing games? Surely the fact that a lot of us girls buy CVG means we've passed your female freak test! If you want some input from girls why not give us a few column inches? Twelve would do nicely. And no, I don't mean Nurse CVG's top make-up tips.

Fluffbundle, via email

CVG *Okay, so we've already closed the book on the existence of girl gamers, but Fluffbundle made her point so well (like a stiletto heel to the nutsack) that we though we'd give her the last word. Let's face it, most guy gamers – Team CVG excluded – aren't especially hot themselves. And column inches? Well, you just got about three and a half, which is about as much as we have to offer...*

HANDHELD TO HANDHELD COMBAT

PSP and NDS will be the most interesting console war ever... or will it? Should we even be comparing them? For a start DS is a pure games machine while PSP is an entertainment device. I also see DS as a short-term filler to nick sales from PSP until GBA2 comes along. Isn't that the real battle: PSP versus GBA2?

Vishal, email

CVG *This 'entertainment device' stuff is crap: just because PSP plays movie and sound files doesn't make it any less of a games machine. Nintendo has suggested GBA2 is in pre-production, but by the time of launch Sony will probably be ready to unleash a refined PSP – or even PSP2.*

SHIFTY BIG 50

I'm dissatisfied with your Big 50. I assumed it was supposed to be the 50 Best Recent Games because crap like True Crime would never get into the Top 50 Games Ever. Sure, lots of old games haven't aged too well, but how can you even DARE say that True Crime is more worthy of a place than legends like Ocarina Of Time, Super Mario World, Tetris and Final Fantasy VII?

Mad Paddy, via email

CVG *It's a rolling Big 50, so it's the 50 current games you should either own or check out. It changes month to month, things sneak in and drop out, but that doesn't mean they're not good anymore. Still, there's been so much interest in the Big 50 we might do a Readers' Edition. Drop us an email if you'd like to get involved!*

Loads of you think the Big 50 is wrong: get in touch and tell us why!

"IF YOU WANT INPUT FROM GIRLS GIVE US A FEW COLUMN INCHES. TWELVE WOULD DO NICELY"

SHORT & CURLIES

CHOPPED UP, SHIPPED OUT

■ What's happened to good music in games?
Katamari Damacy has the best title music EVER. Honest, get the soundtrack.

■ There aren't many titles coming out that support DTS, Dolby Digital 100Hz TVs AND Widescreen. Why? I want to use my home cinema to the max!
You are clearly very rich and we cannot hope to understand your crazy future technology.

■ Why's everyone going on about San Andreas? MGS3 is going to be bigger.
Yeah, but San Andreas might be alright too, y'know. Maybe.

■ I work in a games shop and everyone keeps returning Driv3r with crap excuses.
You can't really blame them though, can you?

■ Okay, so Mario Tennis won't be online, but how many Cube owners have the broadband adaptor anyway?
Yeah – that announcement was a bit like Ford saying the new Fiesta won't be able to fly.

■ Is there any chance of MGS2 or 3 coming out on Cube?
There is a chance... a slim chance... but you'll have to wait a while.

■ No small talk. No fuss. Where is ICO 2?
Still no official news, but the name Nico has been trademarked and Amazon has it down for a November 29 release.

■ Why is Pro Evo better than FIFA?
It plays much more like a real game of football. And IT'S AMAZING.

■ What's the point of review scores?
Um... they let you know how good a game is. Something like that.

MAILBOMBS!

Gritty bits of hot topic causing havoc in our itchy issue ass-crack

■ PSP vs DS (one more time): The battle's raging – choose your side
■ Girl gamers (one more time): How many inches do they want?
■ Tough enough: Are games too easy?
■ Big 50: Did we really just make the whole thing up?
■ Zelda: A happy distraction from having a slag for a mum

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50 REASONS WHY Grand Theft Auto San Andreas IS GANGSTER No.1

CVG RIDES SHOTGUN WITH ROCKSTAR ON A DRIVE-BY OF SAN ANDREAS. THIS MONTH WE BRING YOU THE DROP ON 50 SLAMMIN' FACTS WE PICKED UP TOURING THE MEAN STREETS

01 FRESH TARGETING SYSTEM

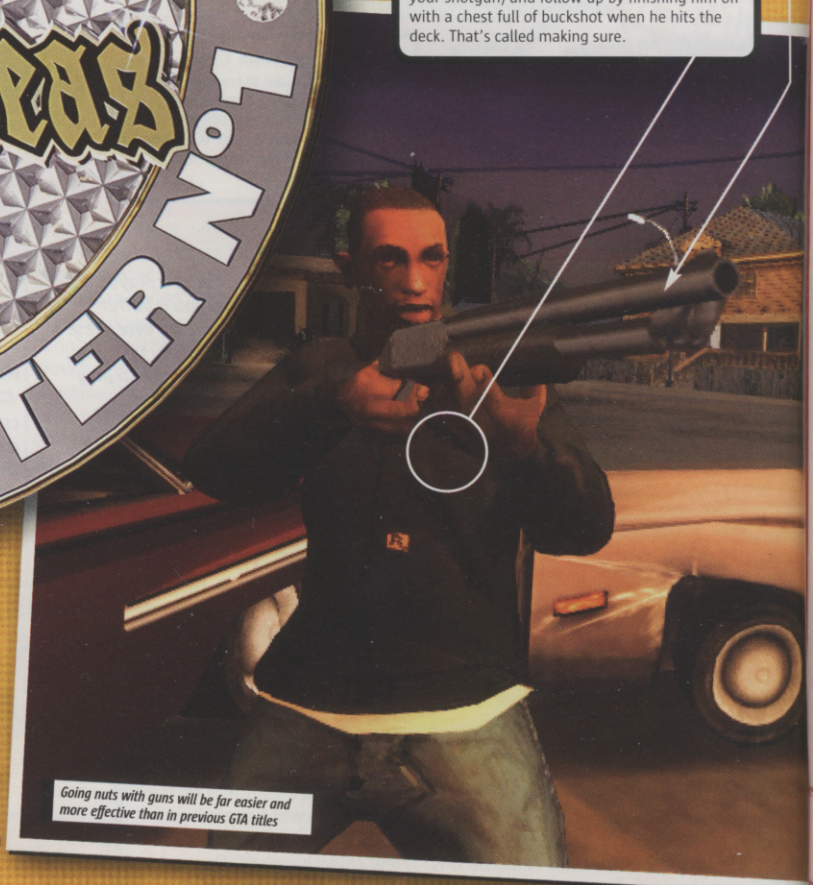
San Andreas's ghetto superstar CJ is a much slicker gunfighter than Tommy ever was in Vice City. That's because Rockstar's created a new weapon targeting system for San Andreas, similar to Manhunt's.

With a click of a button the camera snaps in close behind CJ and you can now run around and strafe as you blat down gangs of bitch-ass punks 'n' pigs. There's still the option to lock onto enemies and flick between them, but it has been refined so that you now auto-target enemies ahead of regular civilians, which ups the pace of the action.

03 MELEE ATTACKS

So you're storming along, blasting every enemy in your path with a pump-action 12-guage, when suddenly an enemy pops up right in your face.

It's tough to get him clean in your sights so instead you punch him to the floor (still holding your shotgun) and follow up by finishing him off with a chest full of buckshot when he hits the deck. That's called making sure.



Going nuts with guns will be far easier and more effective than in previous GTA titles

01 MORE FREEDOM THAN VICE CITY

When you get hooked up with a mission in San Andreas, you're gonna have far more room to stray off the beaten track and go freestyle en route. You call the shots, and sometimes these mini events might affect the outcome of a mission.

02 STREET FIGHTER

CJ can alter his fighting stance when scrapping on the streets and will be lashing out with a new array of close-combat attacks. Plus you can now lock onto enemies during a beating.

03 SNEAKIER SWAT TEAMS

When your Wanted Level shoots up you gotta focus super hard, because SWAT teams are even craftier in San Andreas. In a Motel shoot-out we witnessed, these elite crime fighters burst through the roof skylights and rappelled down into the room. They'll do anything, including leaping out of ventilation shafts.

04 SPECTACULAR DEATHS

San Andreas is rammed with stacks of cool new animations. In one showdown, we watched as CJ popped a cap in an enemy up on a balcony. Instead of just flopping to the floor, he slumped over the railings and fell realistically to the ground below.

05 UPPING THE ATTITUDE

Rockstar's perfectly captured the ferocious high-voltage mood of West Coast life in the early '90s. It's heavily influenced by real-life gang warfare (like the Crip/Blood hatred) as well as masses of other sources such as mean movies from the era like Menace II Society and Boyz N The Hood.

Gangs 'n' ghetto movies like Boyz N The Hood are a massive influence

06 KILLER STORYLINE

Carl Johnson, CJ to his homies, has been living in Liberty City for the past five years allegedly, to get away from Los Santos. But the real reason he legged it was to avoid dealing with the death of his ten-year-old brother, Brian. However, when CJ's older brother Sweet calls to tell him that their momma has been killed, he takes a plane to be back to Los Santos. Things don't go smoothly. A pair of crooked cops that CJ knew from his days in a young offenders' institute pick him up at the airport and toss him out in rival gang territory! After an intense mission getting back to his 'hood, CJ also discovers that there's in-fighting among his old gang, and rival gangs are in the mood for some hostile takeovers. It's all going off big style!

09 CHECK YOUR FAT STAT

You've got to take care of CJ's diet and health regime in San Andreas. But don't worry, it won't slow down the action none. Every time you eat, your Fat Stat goes up. If you don't exercise you'll chub out. The lardier you get the slower and weaker you become. But working out will increase your strength, speed, and stamina.

10 ON THE MENU

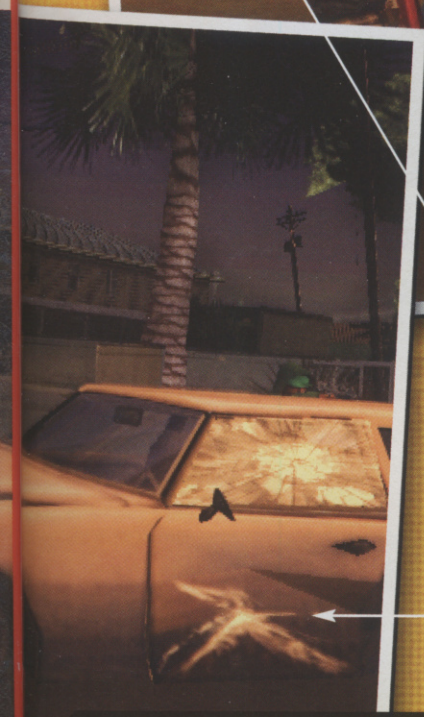
When you visit a food joint, like the Well Stacked Pizza Co, you can choose from a selection of meal deals that'll help you pack on the pounds. We saw CJ offered a couple of cheapo $5 options before going for a blubalicious $15 D-Lux super-size pizza meal with all the trimmings.

"CJ REALISTICALLY SWINGS THE BIKE FROM SIDE TO SIDE TO GAIN MOMENTUM"

18 BMX BAD BOYS

The humble BMX is a wicked new mode of transport in the GTA universe.

Tapping the X button makes CJ pedal, and the new animations are amazing – he swings the bike side to side realistically to gain momentum and sticks his leg out straight when cornering to keep his balance. You'll be able to pop wheelies, plus we're banking on some extra tricks from the Rockstar North boys.

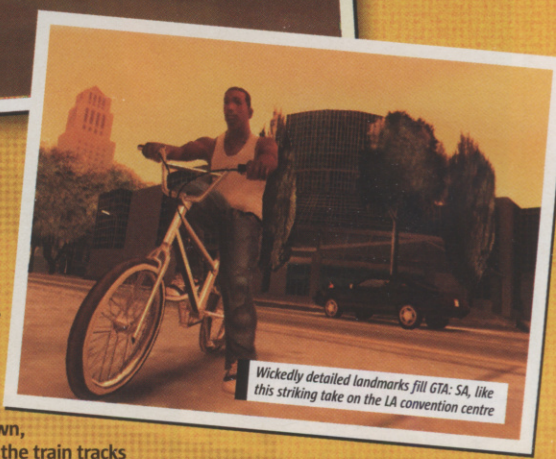


12 FUN AS FAR AS THE EYE CAN SEE

The draw distance is twice that of Vice City, and four times the size in the countryside.

13 RAZOR SHARP

Rockstar North has cranked up the quality of the visuals and made sure that every object is even more detailed, with around 35-40% more polygons on screen at any one time.



Wickedly detailed landmarks fill GTA: SA, like this striking take on the LA convention centre

14 TRAIN SPOTTING

Trains were always on elevated rails or underground in previous GTAs, but in San Andreas locomotives steam though cities at ground level. So you gotta be real watchful when you're blasting about town, because if you rip across the train tracks without looking you could be hit with 300 tons of hard steel.

15 NO LOAD TIMES

Even though San Andreas is roughly five times the size of Vice City you're never left waiting for a new area to load. There's only the slightest of pauses when you enter and exit buildings.

16 SUPER-SIZED

San Andreas isn't a city; it's a whole state. The Los Santos area, based on Los Angeles, is roughly the same size as Vice City. Las Venturas (Las Vegas) and San Fierro (San Francisco) are each about double the size of Vice City, making San Andreas FIVE times bigger.

Quad bikes are one of the new vehicles you'll get to thrash in the countryside

17 PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

In Vice City you bought buildings simply as places to store your motors, to use as save points, as trophies and to earn you some petty cash later on in the game. However, in San Andreas purchasing property holds much more significance as you'll be able to earn fat cash from certain businesses.

19 BODY MOVIN'

San Andreas' hero CJ has the most detailed skeleton of any character in a GTA game to date. His body motions are super smooth and even his jaw moves realistically, so you can actually see him chewing gum as you cruise round town.

20 QUAD BIKES

The motorbike was one of the sweetest additions to Vice City, and San Andreas is promising to up the stakes with even more motorised marvels to scoot around on, including ultra bouncy quad bikes.

21 IT'S NOT ONLINE

Despite various ridiculous rumours that have been floating through cyber space over the past few months, San Andreas is NOT online. It remains a super tight single-player epic in the vein of its mighty siblings.

22 GAG-PACKED

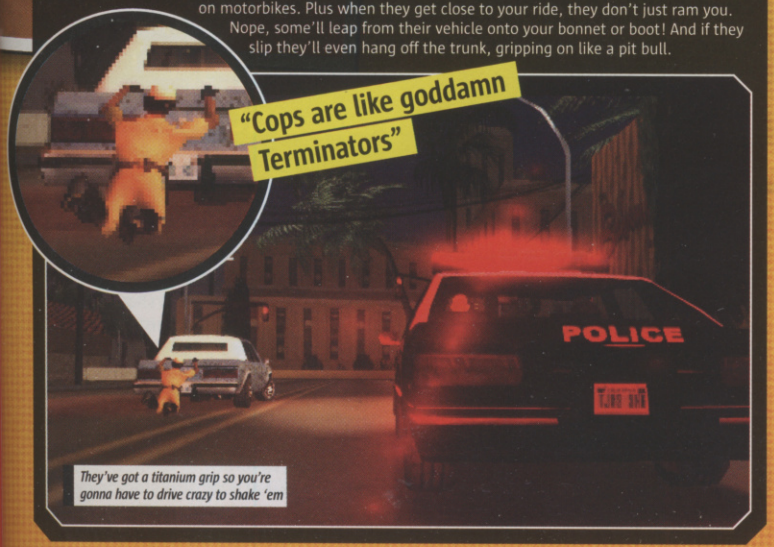
Even though San Andreas isn't as overtly side-splittingly funny as Vice City, Rockstar North is still injecting

11 KAMIKAZE COPS

The law ain't screwing around this time. The cops are like goddamn Terminators, programmed with the sole objective of busting your ass at all costs.

As well as screeching around in souped-up squad cars, some of them now blitz around on motorbikes. Plus when they get close to your ride, they don't just ram you. Nope, some'll leap from their vehicle onto your bonnet or boot! And if they slip they'll even hang off the trunk, gripping on like a pit bull.

"Cops are like goddamn Terminators"



They've got a titanium grip so you're gonna have to drive crazy to shake 'em

50 REASONS WHY grand theft auto San Andreas IS GANGSTER No.1

23 OGF-UNIT

CJ's part of the Orange Grove Families, but the gang's a mess.

You've got to take control of the OGF and build this small-time organisation into a player to be reckoned with. This means recruiting new members and taking control of new areas. Command and conquer... with force.

Rockstar is yet to reveal whether your crew will help you out when you're jacking a ride

24 GONNA GET DIRTY

All the vehicles in San Andreas will pick up mud and dirt – especially when off-road – and will even get rusty.

Cane your motor around the country side and it'll get covered in shit. But a quick trip to the old Pay N Spray will as usual transform your ride into a gleaming new machine.

» masses of dark jokes into its new epic. One gag we witnessed saw CJ's car burst through a giant billboard sign reading 'The taste of things to come' knocking out the words 'things to'. Made us laugh.

25 EVEN FASTER

The vehicle physics have all been tweaked, and they've even been injected with a little extra punch. This'll really come to life when you're steaming cross-country on the open road.

26 REDNECKS

Yep, and knowing Rockstar North, they'll be the toothless banjo-playing pig-humpin' sort! When you head out of the urban areas and into the countryside you'll come across a new breed of unpredictable hicks. Yee-haw, Cleetus!

The classic Uzi 9mm – aim in their general direction, then spray and pray

28 PACKING HEAT

One type of weapon dominated early 90s gun culture and West Coast gang warfare... the 9mm. The Uzi 9-mill will be a staple shooter in Los Santos territory. That said, you can bet your love pistol that Rockstar will chuck in masses of inventive new killing tools into San Andreas. Watch this space for all the latest on the weapons front.

29 HALF-MILE-HIGH MOUNTAIN

On the whole Vice City's terrain is flat as hell. San Andreas on the other hand promises to be a roller coaster of rambling landscapes. Even the urban areas feature small hills. But it's out in the sticks where the peaks and valleys really start to grow. There's even one mountain in San Andreas that's over twice the height of the Empire State building!

30 MISSION START POINTS

Gone are the poncy pink mission trigger points. In San Andreas they're blood red.

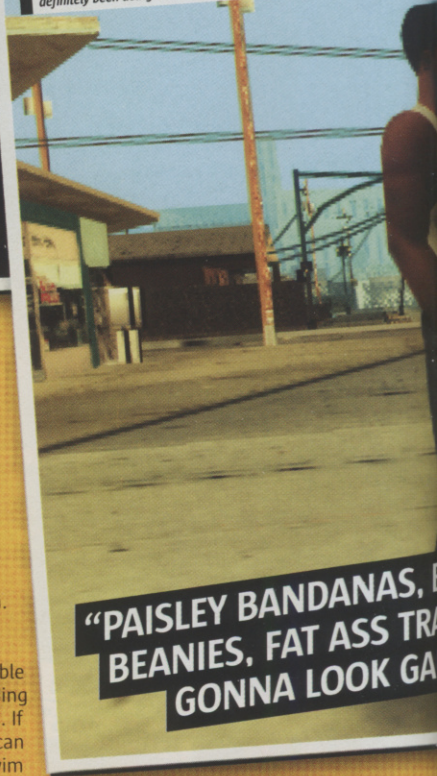
31 TAKE A DIP

Finally Rockstar North has chucked in the ability to swim. It's unlikely there'll be dedicated swimming missions, but if you accidentally slip into water you'll be able to paddle your way to safety – depending on how much stamina CJ has acquired. If you slam into water in a vehicle, you can hit a button to climb out, and then swim to the surface. At last!

32 HIDE 'N' SNEAK

New lighting techniques that Rockstar North has developed for San Andreas mean that there'll be properly dark shadows created throughout the environments. You'll be able to hide in these, and since CJ can creep you can bet your fanny (that's US for backside, doofus) there'll be some stealth-based missions.

Check out CJ's ripped biceps and forearms. He's definitely been doing some heavyweight curls



33 INSANE STUNT BONUSES

As the pace of the vehicles has been souped up, when you hit a ramp you'll soar, spin and shoot further and more dramatically than ever before. And with improved physics, the stunts will look even more dynamic. Plus, if you thought there were loads of stunt opportunities in Vice City, San Andreas will make you gag with excitement. Imagine blasting across ravines, leaping over sand dunes and tumbling down mountains... but make sure you've got Kleenex close to hand.

27 TAMING THE 'FRO

You can take a trip to the barbers at any time to have your hair coiffed and facial hair sculpted.

All the styles we saw – big 70s afro, peroxide, flattop – set you back 50 bucks.

34 DRIVE-BYS

The OGF interact with each other and enemies with a stink-load of attitude.

When you're at the wheel and cruising in hostile territory they'll lean out of the windows and gun down enemy gangs with cold-blooded precision and determination, twisting their bodies and doing anything to get a decent shot at your rivals.

35 WEAR IT WITH STYLE

If you thought Tommy's wardrobe in Vice City was the shiznit, the threads in San Andreas are Arctic cool, in a gangsta style.

The early '90s West Coast wardrobe is sweet – tent-sized b-ball jerseys, paisley bandanas, baggy hoodies, moody beanies, cut-off vests, fat ass trainers, and stacks more. Man, you gonna look like a real gang buster.

urban environments and create mischief across the vast natural landscapes that link the cities, including deserts, hill ranges and forests.

38 NEW WEATHER EFFECTS

Rockstar North's Art Director, Aaron Garbut, has suggested that the team is adding more weather effects for San Andreas. With mountains, could that mean snow at high altitude and sandstorms in desert areas? No concrete details just yet. Stay tuned for more soon...

39 THE SOUNDS OF THE WICKEDNESS

Music's still a huge part of GTA. No tracks have been officially locked down yet, but Rockstar has confirmed that again there'll be a wide array of tunes – not just '90s West Coast hip-hop.

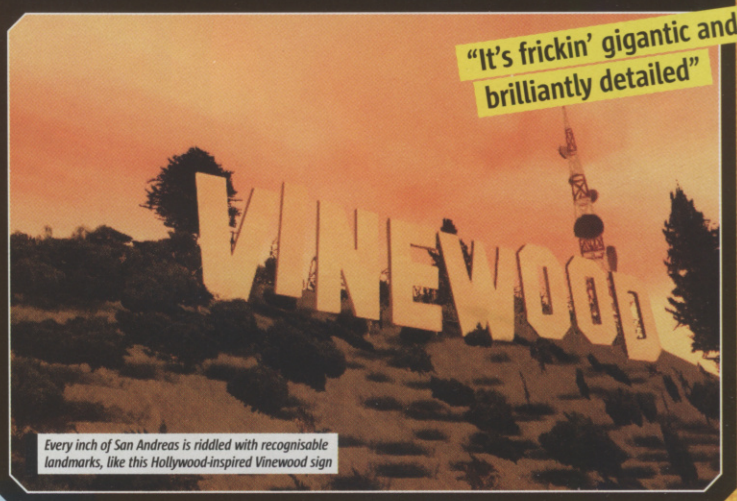
40 ANIMALS

As we toured Los Santos, there were big flocks of birds swooping through the skies, hinting that there might be more creatures dotted throughout San Andreas' varied landscapes.

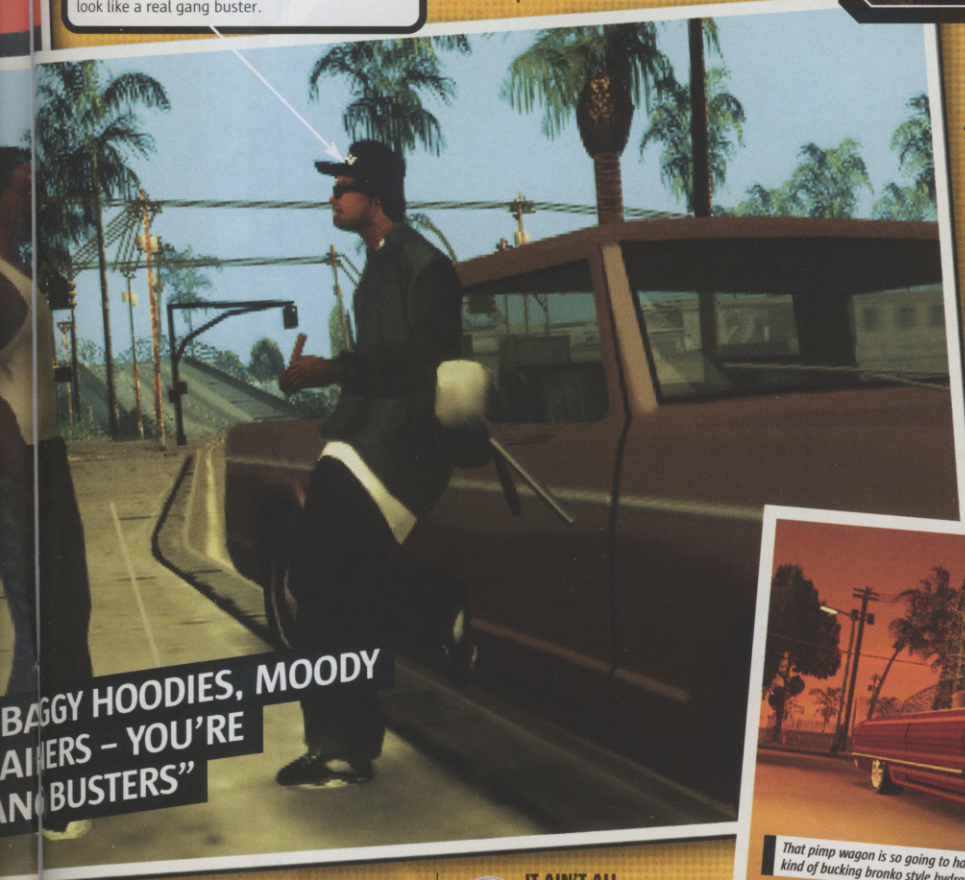
43 GIANT MAP

We got a glimpse of the new map that'll feature in San Andreas, and obviously like the game, it's frickin' gigantic and brilliantly detailed.

As you know, it roughly split into three areas – Los Santos, San Fiero and Las Venturas – with Los Santos situated in the southeast area of the map. None of the other cities are on show yet, so these areas were greyed out to prevent us peppering Rockstar with even more probing questions. However, one of Rockstar's top dogs, Dan Houser, has already suggested that the way you play San Andreas – and the territories you secure with your gang – will affect and personalise your map.



Every inch of San Andreas is riddled with recognisable landmarks, like this Hollywood-inspired Vinewood sign



44 POWER TO THE PEOPLE

The pedestrians in San Andreas are far 'smarter' than the curb dwellers of Vice City, reacting far more realistically towards CJ and any random events that occur. Plus they spout loads more shit too, with over five times as much dialogue for each citizen.

45 INTERIOR DIVINE

The citizens of Vice City weren't indoors people. It was rare that more than one person would be in a shop. But in San Andreas everywhere is heavily populated with motor-mouthed locals. Which means it feels much more like a living, breathing place, buzzing with activity.

46 THE VIBE

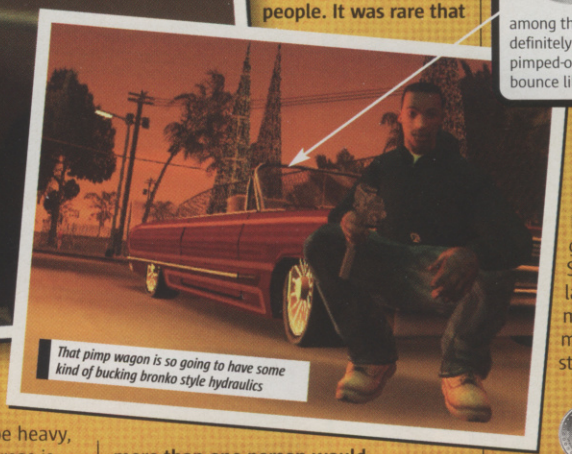
Within each of the vast city areas and countryside retreats, there'll be masses of districts sporting their own unique feel. Every aspect of a place, from the architecture to the accents of the residents, will be distinct. This way, it'll be easier to pinpoint exactly where you are in San Andreas without constantly hunting around on the map for clues.

47 EXTRA POLISH, SHA-BLING!

One of the reasons San Andreas looks so sparklingly fresh is because it now features real-time reflections on every shiny surface, improved lighting effects, different models for day and night and even more detailed textures. So if you thought Vice City was a looker, wait till you see this.

48 BOUNCE, BOUNCE!

We've only seen a small slice of the types of cars, but among the usual saloons and pick-ups there'll definitely be hotrod-style low-riders and awesome pimped-out rides with hydraulic suspension that bounce like angry urban stallions.



That pimp wagon is so going to have some kind of bucking bronko style hydraulics

49 DUEL-LAYERED DVD

San Andreas is so massive that Rockstar North can't squeeze the whole game onto a single-layered DVD. So it'll come out on a dual-layered DVD. Plus, obviously, this means that the developer has more room for chucking extra stuff into the finished product.

50 MEGA MISSIONS

Rockstar North's hot pursuit for gameplay perfection has meant that every aspect of San Andreas is bigger, bolder and more exciting than anything that's come before. Every mission feels like a perfectly produced action adventure movie moment, riddled with spectacular scripted sequences tailored to feel utterly unique, ultra intense and even more monumental in scale. Boo-ya! ✷

36 BREAKING AND ENTERING

Robberies are going to play a major role in San Andreas, but not the bodged gung-ho sort. And we're talking house robberies too, not just shop hits. These home steals are going to require careful planning, co-ordination and skill. However Rockstar is still to reveal exactly how this new feature will actually play out in game.

37 NAUGHTY BY NATURE

For the first time in GTA history you'll be able to take off out of San Andreas' awesomely detail-packed

41 IT AIN'T ALL GANG-BANGING

Managing a crew will be heavy, but less than a sixth of San Andreas is dedicated to gang-related action.

42 KICK-ASS CUT-SCENES

The motion capture has been seriously improved. Every character's body language is right on the money. Rockstar still hasn't revealed the line-up of voice actors yet, but we're betting there'll be a few famous names announced.

SAN ANDREAS BOMBS INTO SHOPS ON 22 OCTOBER. MORE ON R-STAR'S EPIC MENACE TO SOCIETY NEXT ISH!

INCOMING

ACCESS ALL AREAS TO THE FATTEST FORTHCOMING GAMES!

CVG CRUNCHES FAT FIGURES TO BRING YOU MORE!

Right, we've bombarded you with 50 killer facts on GTA: San Andreas, but we're not letting you wimp out just yet. We're throwing more numbers at you – 31 to be precise! That's how many white-hot previews we've packed into this month's monster Incoming section.

With Danté pulling out all the stops in Devil May Cry 3, Shadow Of Rome pushing punishment to the limit on PS2 and Club Football 2005 narrowing the gap on FIFA and Pro Evo, you'd better believe all 31 are fighting for your attention.

Mike Cooper

Mike Cooper *Team CVG*

HOW CVG'S PREVIEWS WORK

CVG's reviews are the most accurate, informative and downright honest you'll ever read. Here's why...

CVG VERDICT BOX

THE BEST PICS
See just how good (or bad!) the game looks with CVG's sweet-as Kylie's bum screenshots. Woo-ee!

INFO OVERLOAD
What it's like to play, how it compares to other games and whether it's any good

ONLINE GAMING
Can you play the game online, against other gamers around the globe? Find out here

RELEASE DATE, PUBLISHER AND DEVELOPER
When it's due out, and who's making it.

PLAYERS
How many people can play. If it's anything from one to 32, we'll put 32!

CVG OPINION
What we thought of the game, no matter what stage of development the game is at

WE LOVE
The good things we like about the game so far

WE HATE
The things we'd really like the developers to avoid including in the final game

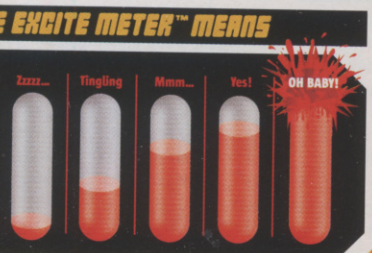
FORMAT
The console we played the game on is highlighted red, but other formats it's coming out on are listed

WEBSITE
Want more info, more screens and to see it in action? Visit this URL!

IN A NUTSHELL
A brief summary of what the game is like. If it's an update and CVG has already previewed it we'll also sum up stuff we've said before

WHAT THE EXCITE METER™ MEANS

You can tell how excited CVG's experts are about the game being previewed simply by looking at the Excite Meter! Easy, huh?



Devil May Cry 3

Capcom has completely rebuilt the graphics engine so that all the stages are much more detailed and destructible

Danté's new fighting animations are slicker than ever this time out, gelling together seamlessly

- PUBLISHER: CAPCOM
- DEVELOPER: CAPCOM PROD. STUDIO 1
- OUT: EARLY 2005

IN A NUTSHELL

Devil May Cry 2 wasn't Dante's finest hour, but Capcom's coolest action star has got his shit together and turned things round for this power-packed prequel to the original DMC. Violence has never looked so stylish.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/DEVIL3

When Devil May Cry first slammed onto PS2 it was like Godzilla had just stomped into town wearing Ray-Bans. It was monstrously cool. Gallons of style, rampant speed, killer thrills and skull-fracturing heavy metal! The deadly cocktail left everyone who came in contact with it punch drunk with demon slaying love. Everything was rosy... until Devil May Cry 2 came along to ruin the party.

DMC2 was pumped out by the publishers at lightning speed, and couldn't help but feel rushed. But Capcom has learned from its mistake and poured masses of time and energy into Devil May Cry 3 – a prequel to the original game – to reclaim the kingdom of cool and re-establish Danté as the slickest sonuvabitch on PS2.

MOSHING WITH MONSTERS

We don't usually toss off about intro movies, but when you first witness the younger, fresher and cockier Danté in action you'll be nursing bullet-sized goosebumps.

He's sat in his office chomping pizza, when a gang of demons launch a surprise attack and hack into his chest and legs with giant scythes. Like he's bothered. He walks over to the jukebox, dragging a demon that's still holding onto the scythe buried in his chest, and says, "This party's getting crazy. LET'S ROCK!" In kicks the booming metal, then one of the most outrageous and funny fight scenes we've ever seen sparks off.

Danté surfs enemies like boogie boards across the floor and swivels

Danté's Trickster fighting style is full of mental gravity defying acrobatics

Now if you hold down the sword attack button you charge up special long-range assaults

"DANTÉ SURFS ENEMIES LIKE BOOGIE BOARDS AND PEPPERS OUT A CATHERINE WHEEL OF BULLETS"

"USE THE SHOTGUN LIKE NUNCHUCKS, SPRAYING BUCKSHOT EVERYWHERE"

ICE DOGGY, SIT!

Boss fights in DMC2 were about as intimidating as a blind, lame pensioner. You could just repeatedly twat bosses and defeat them without any tactics whatsoever.

Thank funk that's all changed. You now have to work your knackers off to hunt out a boss character's weak spots and spy their attack strategies.

The first end-of-level guardian you meet is this three-headed ice-encrusted pooch

He's got the mutha of all dog breath, so don't get too close

The hellhound's chained up but he can still lurch forwards and snap your arse

Danté hits the pole-dancing club and busts a new swinging kick move on the punters

Danté makes like Maximo and unleashes a ferocious rapid stab move in Swordmaster mode

Behind-the-back blasting! As Gunslinger you can ventilate enemies without even looking at them

round peppering out a Catherine Wheel of bullets. But the crowning moment has to be when he flicks some pool balls into the air and shoots the cue ball into the pack of balls as they float in the air, smacking them into the faces of his demon attackers. EAT IT!

BECOME A STYLE GURU

This opening mini movie is all about style, and that's Devil May Cry 3's focus: mastering insane fighting styles. At the moment there are four to get to grips with – Trickster, Gunslinger, Swordmaster and Royal Guard – but Capcom has tipped us the wink that there could be more.

The way it works is that you can customise and tailor Danté's fighting technique to suit your own tastes as you blitz through the gorgeous and now massively destructible new levels. At the beginning of each mission you pick your style and upgrade each discipline with swish new moves and amazing abilities.

Take Trickster Danté into combat and you've got a pretty even balance between gunplay and swordsman skills, but you're nimbler and more acrobatic. You're tougher to corner with unlockable moves like Flip Escape and brilliant at using your surroundings with moves like a Wall Hike. As for Royal Guard, it's the most defensive of the styles, built on well-timed blocks and smart new hand-to-hand moves.

Swordmaster and Gunslinger do exactly what they say on the tin, but the new attacks are awesome. Like as Gunslinger, when you get a shotgun Danté uses it like nunchuks, viciously spraying buckshot. And the Twosome Time upgrade lets the silver-haired slickster target two enemies simultaneously.

Each mission is crafted to suit one particular style, but you've got complete freedom to tackle each scenario with whichever style you feel most expert. And unlike DMC2, all the environments are much more varied, switching between vast, imposing expanses and intensely claustrophobic killing hotspots.

Don't panic, all this style comes with a fat dollop of substance. You have to properly focus and play up to the skills of whichever style you've selected or else the hordes of unholy demons will rip your red-leathered ass to shreds.

Capcom's best-dressed demon slayer has definitely got his mojo back, and it can only grow and get more potent with so much development time between now and DMC3's launch early next year.

PRINCE OF PAIN

Dante's new Royal Guard fighting style sees the man holstering his blade and gun, opting instead to dish out some hand-to-hand helpings of kick-ass hurt.

Danté's got some mental close-range martial arts moves at his disposal, and he's not shy about burying his heavyweight boots into enemy brains and giving them a good mashing every chance he gets. That said, Royal Guard is also a defensive style, and you can counter incoming attacks with perfectly timed blocks.

Danté nails a sweet axe kick reminiscent of Iori's infamous attack in King Of Fighters

A single vicious and well-placed roundhouse kick can topple a line of foes

Dante can't move a muscle without doing it in style. Check out his flamboyant flying kick

CVG OPINION

The new custom-styled combat system and revamped ballsy attitude are exactly what the series needed to remedy the damage of DMC2. **Mike**

WE LOVE
- Bollock-loads of speed and attitude
- Multiple fighting styles and moves
- Cooler destructible environments

WE HATE
- The camera's still dodgy, so you're often fighting enemies off-screen
- Looks-wise it ain't that fresh

* PUBLISHER
UBISOFT
* DEVELOPER
RED STORM
* OUT:
NOVEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Full-scale conflict has broken out in China, and it's up to you and your squad of special forces to sort it out. The orders system has been simplified, and the view-point switched to third person since last time around.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PS2, GC, PC

WWW.GHOSTRECON2.COM

Tom Clancy's GHOST RECON 2

Each member of your squad has a personality, and they'll chip in with some banter from time to time

This time around you're going to be able to use voice control in the single-player game.

The North Koreans have finally gone barmy and started their own Chinese takeaway – they've sent half their army into Chinese territory and taken it away.

China, fearful of retaliation by the Koreans' ally, Russia, has asked a multinational force to deal with the Korean invasion. Which is where you come in, leading a squad of Ghost Recon US special forces to kick those cocky Koreans back into their crap-hole country, Uncle Sam style.

Of course, that scenario holds about as much water as a dolls' teaspoon, but since its got the name Tom 'I dream of war' Clancy slapped all over it, we're now crapping ourselves here at CVG lest it happen tomorrow. Which is why we're itching to get our hands on this follow up to one of the most popular squad-based shooters around – when that Korean shit hits those Chinese fans we want to be ready.

There will be new multiplayer modes, but there are no details on them as yet

As much of the fighting takes place in towns and forests, the environments are less wide open than before

GHOST IN THE WAR MACHINE

The emphasis in Recon II is on making you want to fill your camo pants due to the terrifying, exciting, nerve-wracking feeling of being in the middle of a battle zone. You'll be conducting operations in full-scale firefights, with friendly and enemy forces duking it out all around you. Rocket spitting attack helicopters, two-ton main battle tanks and creeping artillery barrages are all to be expected.

What'll really hit you like a laser-guided bomb when you first see Recon II is how much better it looks than the last one. The environments are more detailed than ever, with cool lighting effects, and loads of realistic physics meaning that buildings don't collapse the same way twice.

Also given a new lick of paint is the orders system. Now, to make sure your squad doesn't just stand around scratching its arse while all hell is breaking loose, the AI has been upgraded and the way you give commands simplified.

Otherwise, this burst of techno-war action is firmly in the mould of its mega-popular predecessor. Calling in air support and mortar barrages will be key, and as ever you have to seriously watch your ass 'cos it only takes one well-placed sniper round to take you down.

Roll on November, as we can't wait to start haunting the battlefield again. *

PLACE YOUR ORDERS

To make things a little more snappy and action-packed, they've cut down on the hassle of controlling your team mates.

Much of your buddies' behaviour is now left to the AI, so you can just point the boys in the right direction and they'll take care of themselves.

Mostly it's just bog-standard move orders that you give, though you can order suppressing fire when necessary. It's nice and simple...

...which is good news. You don't want to be explaining to your sniper that since half the Korean army's opened fire, you'd rather he didn't stand up when he could be crouching behind that wall!

They've switched the view point to third-person - apparently it has a greater appeal to gamers

CVG OPINION Recon needs a revamp, and this update looks the biz. Purists might not like the stripped-down team-control, but it should be more of a bitchin' battle sim for it. **Steve O**

WE LOVE
- Feeling like our asses are on the line
- Calling in artillery strikes
- Watching a battle raging around us

WE HATE
- Less options in the orders system
- Dying from a single shot from someone you can't even see

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING... / ZZZ...

new to dvd

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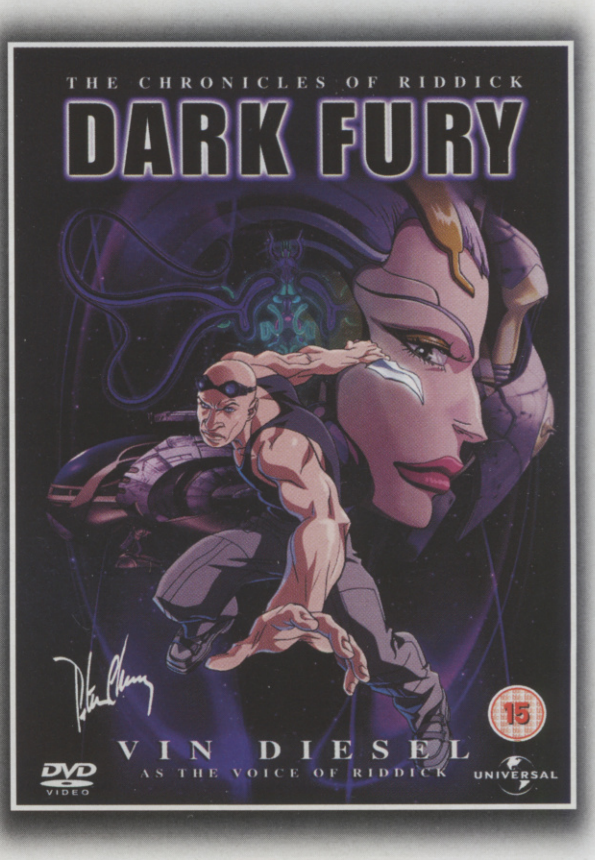
Pitch Black Special Edition DVD

This Pitch Black Special Edition provides the perfect introduction to the Chronicles Of Riddick as well as adding over 40 minutes of bonus material to the original release. The disc boasts extras including the opening 9 minutes of forthcoming The Chronicles Of Riddick movie, plus animations, encyclopaedia, diaries and additional stories about the history of the ultimate anti-hero – Richard B. Riddick.

Released 16th August



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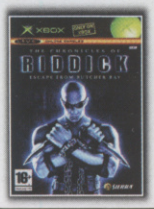
The Chronicles of Riddick: Dark Fury DVD

Dark Fury has been created as a prequel to The Chronicles Of Riddick to bridge the gap of Riddick's movements after Pitch Black. Directed by one of the world's most revered animators Peter Chung (Animatrix - Matriculated, MTV Aeon Flux) and featuring the voice of Vin Diesel, this is an essential addition to the Riddick saga.

Released 16th August



Buy Chronicles Of Riddick: Escape From Butcher Bay on Xbox (released 13th August) for £39.99 and get the Dark Fury DVD for ONLY £4.99 (RRP £12.99).

buy now: www.hmv.co.uk

Titles and prices subject to availability while stocks last at participating stores/on-line.

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Tom Clancy's RAINBOW SIX 3 BLACK ARROW

See the Black Hawk out the window? It does a fly-by, gunning everything down

- PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
- DEVELOPER: UBISOFT
- OUT: AUTUMN
- ONLINE GAMING
- x16

IN A NUTSHELL

This FIFA-style yearly update offers identikit gameplay, but with new missions, weapons and locations to freshen things up. Multiplayer has been beefed up, with new split-screen co-op and more online Live games.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.RAINBOWSIX3.COM

The AI of your team-mates is better too, so you can rest easy knowing they're covering your backside

All-new locations like this gorgeous castle setting gives a fresh challenge for seasoned Rainbow Six vets

You should see the guy's face. Properly shitting it. And no wonder – he's been grabbed by the throat by an Uzied-up terrorist.

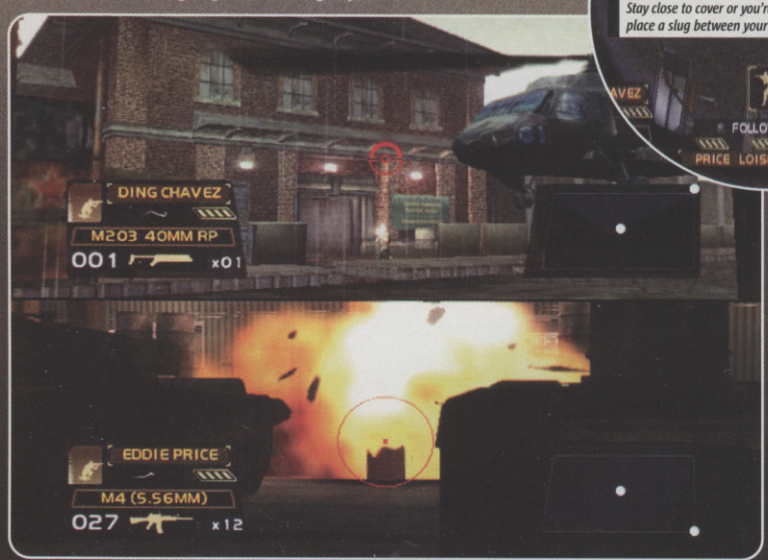
That's not the worst of it, either. You're standing just a few feet away, pointing the muzzle of an M-4 carbine in his face. You don't WANT to blow his mush off – after all, you're a good guy and the bullet is meant for the bloke wearing the balaclava. But these MGs sure do kick, and unless you're aim's as accurate as a Zidane free kick, the guy you're supposed to be saving ends up with a face like a split watermelon.

That's one of Black Arrow's improvements over Rainbow Six 3, see – sharper enemy AI. These guys now use hostages as human shields, call for back-up and generally make your life a bit harder. And because Black Arrow favours gritty realism rather than gung-ho arcade glory, so you go home in a bodybag if you take a bullet up close, you'll find this a steep challenge even if you're seasoned Rainbow Six pro.

WHAT ELSE IS NEW?

Good question. Play through the first couple of levels and it's hard to tell. Your squad is made up of the same four oddly-named guys (Ding Chavez still sounds like an adult entertainer whose formidable tallywackle can break women), the weapons and equipment on offer is virtually identical and the mission objectives are strangely familiar: eliminate terrorists and rescue hostages.

Obviously it's a bit more complicated than that, but it's fair to say that the basics remain the same.

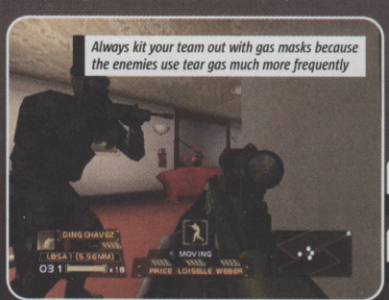


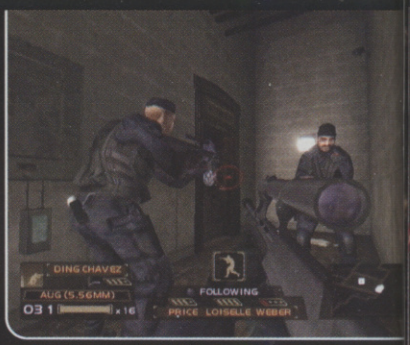
The split-screen co-op mode is class. You can play all the campaign missions with a mate and two AI buddies

If you're not hooked up to Live, the split-screen game gives you a taster of what you're missing

All the missions and locations are new. The London Underground is the setting for the first level; someone has planted a bomb on the Tube and you've got to disarm it. Next you've got a hostage situation in a hotel in Cannes. See, same objectives, different settings.

You do get a fat load of new stuff if you take Black Arrow on Xbox Live, though. For starters, you can talk tactics with team-mates in the voice lobby before the game's even begun. But it's the new Capture The Flag mode that gets us excited, because it's the perfect intro to Clan fighting on Live. And with Halo 2 just a few months away, it's a wicked taste of what's to come. ✳


Always kit your team out with gas masks because the enemies use tear gas much more frequently


The order system is the same, allowing you to execute two-pronged attacks with military precision

HEAD START

Black Arrow's terrorists are a lot smarter than the average goon.

They no longer attempt to tackle you single-handedly, instead calling for back-up when the odds are against them. They play dirty too, using hostages as human shields. Make sure you aim good, y'hear.

If the terrorists hear you coming, they'll use every means possible to protect their ass

Take that sucker down with a well-aimed slug in the bonce. Switching to Full Auto is a bad idea, though

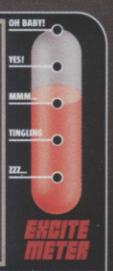
These guys can chuck Molotov cocktails with blinding accuracy from miles away. Even when they can't see you. No fair

CVG OPINION

Not much has changed since the original, but that's no bad thing. Fresh single-player missions and a handful of new weapons, but there's more on Live. **Alex**

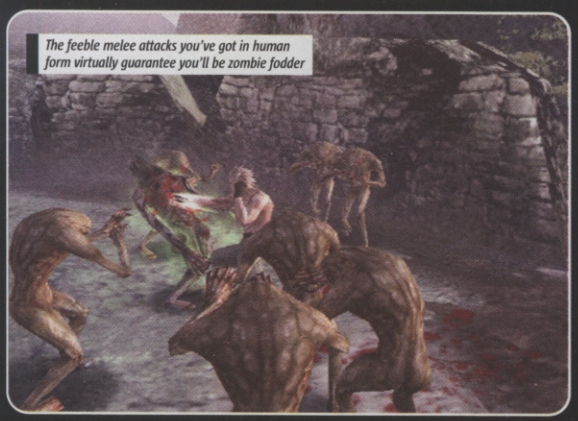
WE LOVE
- The ultra-aggressive enemies
- Fresh missions designed for pros
- All the new Live options

WE HATE
- The gameplay is just the same
- Man, some levels are HARD
- Not Ding Chavez again!



ALTERED BEAST

Hacking into the undead hordes with your freakish mutations provides moments of pure blood-soaked bliss



The feeble melee attacks you've got in human form virtually guarantee you'll be zombie fodder

- PUBLISHER SEGA
- DEVELOPER SEGA WOW
- OUT: Q1 2005

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Sega's classic shape-shifting slash 'em up reawakens on the PS2 for some fast-action, hi-octane body-shredding carnage. You play as a genetically modified soldier capable of changing into a variety of monstrous forms.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.SEGA.COM/GAMES/

GORE BLIMEY!

The awesome transformation CGI is some of the nastiest, goriest and downright coolest stuff we've ever seen in a game. It's on a par with Lara Croft whipping her baps out, should she ever do that.

The best one is when you morph into the Raptor. Your arms slowly contort before rupturing in showers of fleshy chunks, splintered marrow and geysers of blood, as feathered wings force their way through your remaining stumps. Ick.

1 *Yup, here's that wing-bursting splat sequence in all its gory glory...*

2 *...suddenly, we're not so keen on the idea of crazy critter body-morphing*

3 *This one had us quivering like girls as your face rips and splits in a screaming rage*

4 *Admittedly, the finished transformation loses some of its gruesome fear factor - quack?*

5 *Ah, another CVG fave - juice seeps from behind the poor guy's eye socket...*

6 *...before sending it shooting at the screen in a fountain of blood - et voilà! Werewolf!*

Think puberty's traumatic? At least the fur doesn't fly out fast enough to rupture flesh and send bone searing through the air. Most people don't celebrate their voice breaking by chewing the head off the nearest bystander either – but then they're not in Altered Beast.

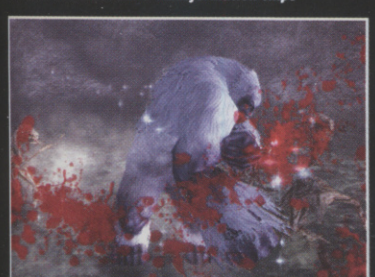
In a back-story ripped straight out of RoboCop, our hero falls under the scalpel of a shadowy scientific organisation after being killed in the line of duty – only to reawaken pumped full of body-modifying technology, designed to turn him into the ultimate fighting machine.

UNLEASH THE BEAST

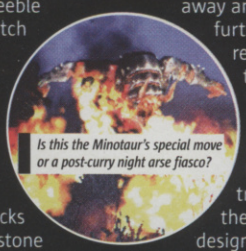
Very early into the frenzied action, you'll receive your first transformation chip – one capable of twisting your physical form into a sharp-clawed, slathering werewolf. You'll collect more of these chips as you hack through the ferocious hordes stuffed into levels and defeat the massive bosses. Currently, you'll transform into a Werewolf, Dragon, Lizard, Yeti, Raptor, Minotaur and Grizzly Bear. All feature a basic combat move, agility move and special attack that you'll need to take full advantage of to progress through the hazardous locations.

In human form, you're virtually useless against the relentless droves of miscreants intent on disassembling you, limb by limb – all you've got are a couple of feeble punches and a manly leap. Switch to Raptor though and you'll morph into a towering mutant eagle, able to take to the skies, vomit devastating bolts or rip up the air with its wicked tornado special move. Similarly, as the Yeti, you can breathe ice, pick up massive rocks to chuck about, roll through stone barriers and pound the ground to raise flesh-piercing stalagmites.

It's a big lizard! With whiskers! Mutilate the bosses to collect extra transformation chips



The character models look a bit nob right now, but at least the game's bloody...



Is this the Minotaur's special move or a post-curry night arse fiasco?

SUCK IT UP

Once a transformation's complete, your Life Force starts depleting rapidly. You'll need to absorb energy from the corpses of your enemies to keep it stocked, ensuring your bloody rampage doesn't let up for a second. If it empties though, your science-ravaged tissue begins decomposing, eating into your health.

This means you'll either have to ramp up the slaughter or risk leaving yourself exposed by returning to human form. Even then though, you're still at risk – as your flesh deteriorates, your health continues to ebb away and you can't make any further transformations until it's restored. It's clever, ensuring the tension stays taut.

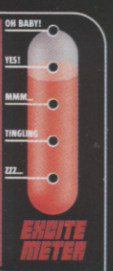
The game's still in the early stages at the moment and it's difficult to know how well the beast-morphing trickery's going to meld into the overall action and level design – we're hoping your different forms will open up all sorts of possibilities when it comes to interacting with the environments. Judging by what we've seen so far though, Altered Beast is promising plenty of bloody, button-mashing old-skool carnage, and we can't wait to sink our claws into it further.

CVG OPINION

There are ingenious puzzle elements alongside the relentless limb shredding. It's early days yet, but we're excited about Sega's classic claret-drenched series. **Matt W**

WE LOVE
- Ultra-gory transformation scenes
- Distinct beast abilities are great
- Relentless pace doesn't let up

WE HATE
- Action's pretty repetitive right now
- Creatures look a bit silly



STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT

- PUBLISHER: ACTIVISION
- DEVELOPER: PANDEMIC/LUCASARTS
- OUT: SEPTEMBER 21
- ONLINE GAMING
- x16

IN A NUTSHELL

Battlefront is Star Wars meets Battlefield 1942 – a wickedly enjoyable online multiplayer team-based blaster. You can also play offline against AI opponents or with a mate in split-screen co-operative showdowns.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

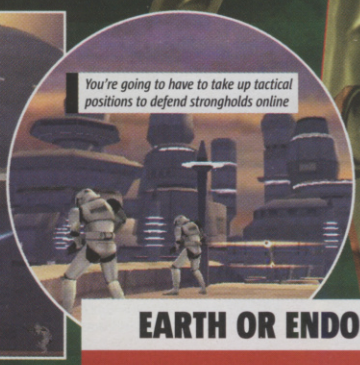
ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

WWW.LUCASARTS.COM

No screens yet, but Wookiee planet Kashyyyk will appear as a level. Rrrrauuuaaaggggghhhh!

Bespin's Cloud City has two maps – one ground-based, the other involving battles with X-Wings



You're going to have to take up tactical positions to defend strongholds online

An AT-ST bites the dust as an Imperial Scout Trooper looks for Ewoks to fry

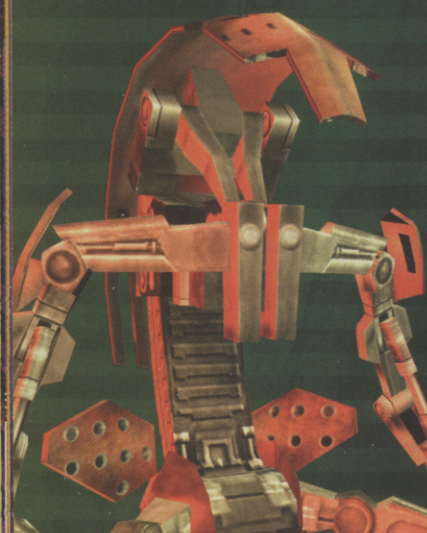
A Jedi Starfighter on Kamino, a planet that gets more rain per year than Britain. Fact

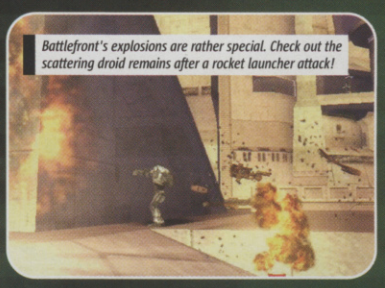
You can kill Ewoks! This is what Star Wars fans have dreamt about most when tucked up under their Darth Vader duvets – apart from maybe frying Jar Jar Binks in a giant microwave of death, or slipping your length to hot chick Princess Leia.

Yep, in Star Wars Battlefront you can finally line up those ever so cute and cuddly critters from Return Of The Jedi in your Imperial sniper rifle sights and pick them off, one by one. For hours.

Battlefront is definitely shaping up to rock your universe – a single and multiplayer shooter for up to 16 players on PS2 and Xbox, set across all the Star Wars movies (including the new Episode III), and complete with multi-person vehicles including X-Wings and Snow Speeders.

At a special LucasArts outdoor event held in San Francisco, we had access to all formats on separate networks, and although there were slight differences in the levels available to play and graphics quality on each machine – PC was the best, then Xbox, and finally PS2 – the actual gameplay experience was identical. Funny, brutal, exciting, awe-inspiring, exhilarating – everything Star Wars should be.





Battlefront's explosions are rather special. Check out the scattering droid remains after a rocket launcher attack!

CLONE ALONE

Battlefront is predominantly a multiplayer game, but there are still single-player options for those of you hankering for a more hermit-like existence. A Historical Campaign mode provides a story across 17 levels ranging from the Clone War to the Civil War, whereas Galactic Conquest allows you to take over planets and unlock special bonuses to beef up your firepower, such as Luke Skywalker, who'll fight alongside you as a non-playable character, scything down scum with his throbbing lightsaber.

Each of the offline single-player modes has AI squad-mates that you can control by hitting the D-pad for commands such as 'Follow Me', as well as two-player split-screen co-op for the Galactic Conquest.

However, it's the online multiplayer side of things where Battlefront really starts to deliver, giving you the option of playing on the side of any of the four factions (Imperials Vs Rebels, or Clone Army Vs Separatists) across ten planets. These include ice planet Hoth and waterworld Kamino.

"YOU CAN FINALLY LINE UP EWOKS IN YOUR IMPERIAL SNIPER SIGHTS AND PICK THEM OFF. FOR HOURS"

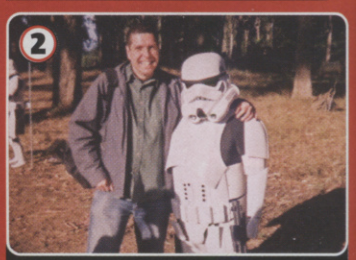
EARTH OR ENDOR?

Not only did we get to stay at George Lucas's Skywalker Ranch, we got special access to a LucasArts Battlefront event in San Francisco's National Park, the Presidio.

Here we encountered dozens of Stormtroopers and Rebels in a setting that was the spitting image of the forest moon Endor from Return Of The Jedi, complete with Ewok sound effects and Star Wars music!

1

Fight the power! Here I'm joining up with the Rebel cause on a sunny morning, to defeat the evil Jar Jar Binks



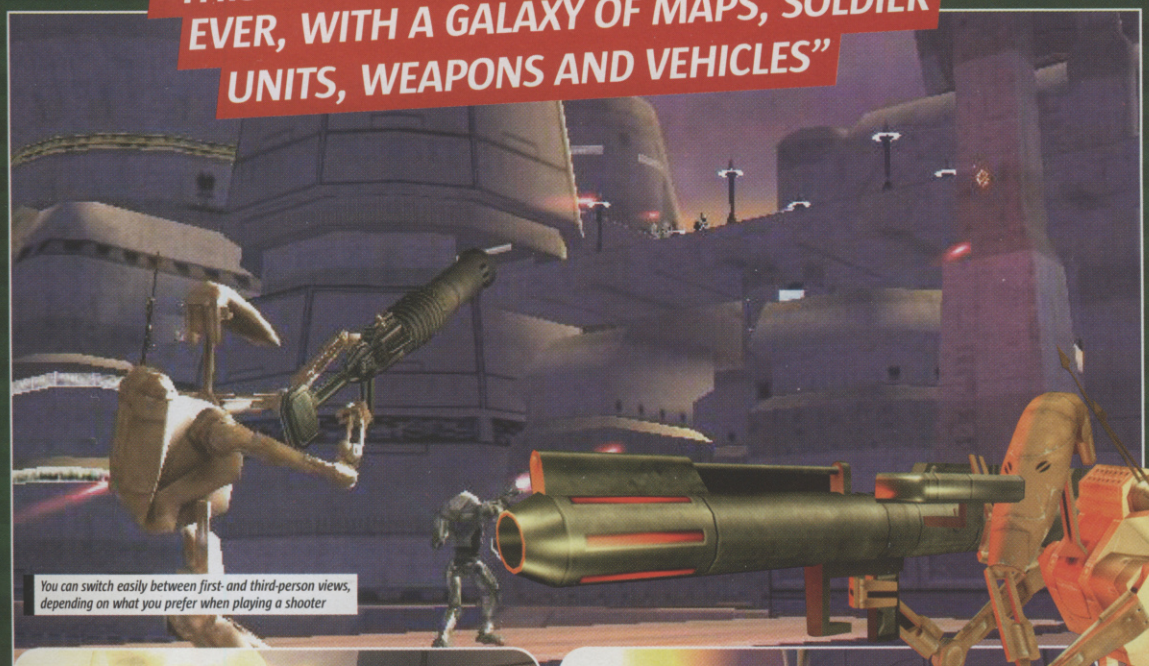
2

Aren't you a little short to be a Stormtrooper? Me and Darth Vader's buddy shortly before he put me in cell 1138

3

Endor is doing a booming trade in tourism – there's tons of punters wandering about. Check out my Ewok fur coat

"THIS COULD BE THE BEST STAR WARS GAME EVER, WITH A GALAXY OF MAPS, SOLDIER UNITS, WEAPONS AND VEHICLES"



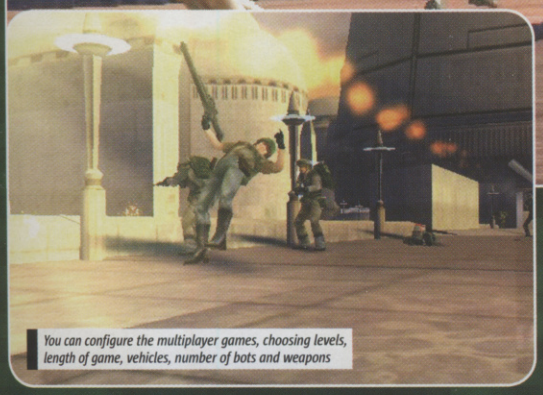
You can switch easily between first- and third-person views, depending on what you prefer when playing a shooter

To infinity and beyond! Dark Troopers and Jet Troopers both have cool jetpacks

The vehicles are definitely the best bit in Battlefront, and this was again proved when we got hands-on a different level set in Cloud City above the planet Bespin from The Empire Strikes Back. This map allows you to pilot an X-Wing or TIE fighter, fly around and shoot enemies, then land on a platform and enjoy firefights against ground-based foes.

Another map threw us into a conflict on the planet Geonosis, where we had wicked fun playing on the side of Count Dooku's Separatists as a Droideka, those lethal rolling robots from Episodes I and II, firing at high speed against Clone Troopers and using a rechargeable shield to protect us from a barrage of lasers.

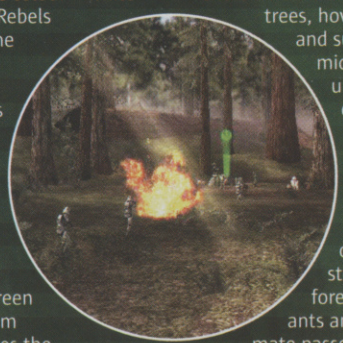
Battlefront could be the best Star Wars game ever, with a galaxy of maps, soldier units, weapons, and vehicles – all playable online with up to 16 of your mates, and offline against AI or with two-player split-screen co-op. Ewoks could become an endangered species after the launch date on September 21...



You can configure the multiplayer games, choosing levels, length of game, vehicles, number of bots and weapons

A trio of Stormtroopers enter into 'aggressive negotiations' with the Rebels

The basic idea behind this mode is to help your team dominate the battlefield by taking over strategic control points. This is achieved by simply standing near these tall beams of light for a certain amount of time until they slowly change colour – white for neutral, red for the Rebels and Clones, green for the Imperials and CIS and yellow for various AI-controlled third factions such as the vicious Tuskan Raiders. The more control points your team occupies, the quicker your opponents' score – indicated by a coloured bar at the top of the screen – will decrease. The team reduced to zero first loses the game. Simple.

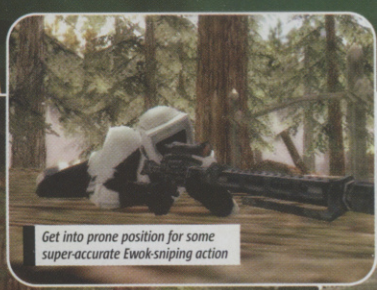


IMPERIAL ENTANGLEMENTS

The first map we played was on the forest moon of Endor from Return Of The Jedi, where we jumped straight into the game as a Dark Trooper – one of five Imperial soldier units available. This bad boy has a jetpack – similar to the Fett bounty hunters – that you can use by pressing Jump twice, allowing you to fly for a short amount of time, steaming over trees, hovering above the action and suddenly landing in the middle of a firefight to unleash your blast cannon on Rebel rascals.

Next we spawned into the game as an Imperial Pilot and climbed aboard an AT-ST walker as the driver, then proceeded to stomp our way round the forest, crushing Rebels like ants and allowing a squad-mate passenger to fire from a gun turret. Fantastic! Unfortunately, the pesky Ewok menace had prepared a log trap, which was set off when we entered a clearing, two tree trunks swinging down from above and crushing our cabin like a grape.

A gaggle of AT-STs. Both Imperials and Rebels can pilot them and blast enemies from the gun turrets



Get into prone position for some super-accurate Ewok-sniping action

HITCH A RIDE!

Battlefront includes over 30 vehicles in the game, from land-based tanks, AT-ST walkers and speeder bikes to flying vehicles, such as TIE fighters and Y-Wings.

Some of the vehicles are single-seaters, but others, like the Republic Gunship, can carry up to six squad-mates. With one of you doing the driving, the others can get busy operating the gun turrets and lasers to dish out maximum firepower. Get in!

Controlling rampaging AT-STs is tricky but heaps of fun

Speeder bikes can zip in and out of the densely packed trees

Clone Warriors climb aboard a tank from the Yavin IV level

CVG OPINION Battlefront plays as good as it looks, and if the online part works as smoothly as when we saw it in action, this could be the SW game we've long been looking for. **Jamie**

WE LOVE
- Huge online battles
- Features Star Wars Episodes I-VI
- Troopers with jetpacks!

WE HATE
- No playable Jedi characters
- Multiplayer is really where it's at – get your gaming machine online!

CONFLICT: VIETNAM

* PUBLISHER
SCI
* DEVELOPER
PIVOTAL
* OUT:
TBC

ONLINE GAMING | x4

IN A NUTSHELL

It's Conflict gameplay airlifted from the sun-baked streets of Iraq and dumped in the steaming jungles of Nam. Refined squad commands, a more story-led structure, and 14 levels of Charlie skull-splitting.

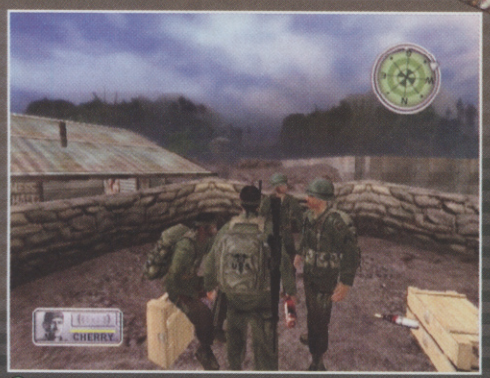
AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PC, PS2

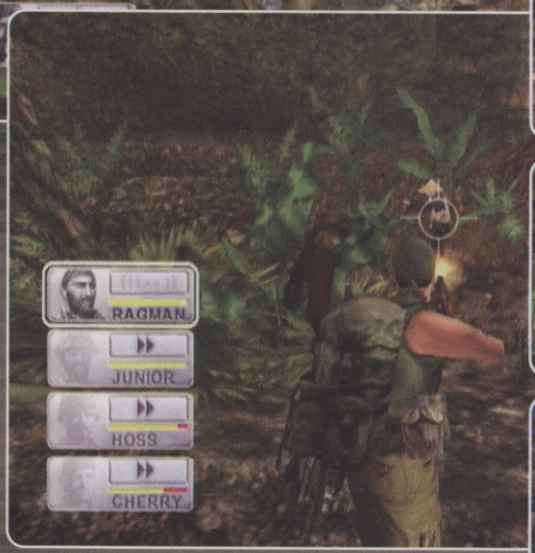
WWW.SCI.CO.UK/GAMES



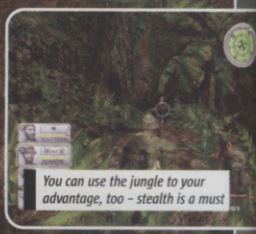
Cherry starts his Nam experience in Ghost Town, a hard-rockin', hard-drinkin', hard-swearin' camp

Defending LZs from enemy fire is an important part of the early levels

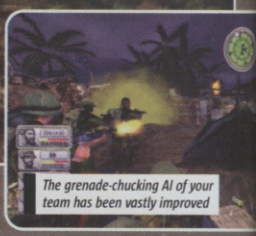
Machine-gun emplacements make a welcome return in Conflict: Nam



The jungle environments mean enemies are camouflaged and therefore are much harder to spot and often get right on top of you. Stay frosty!



You can use the jungle to your advantage, too – stealth is a must

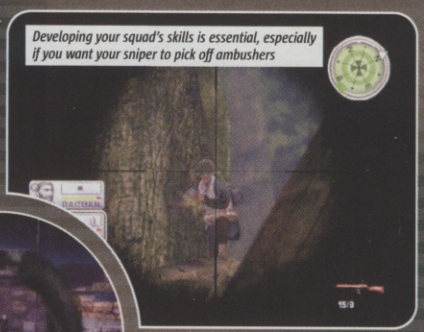


The grenade-chucking AI of your team has been vastly improved

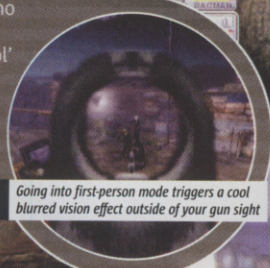
Vietnam? We don't know what all the fuss was about. If you ask us, hanging about in the tropics drinking beer, eating barbecued food, razzing about in helicopters with the stereo turned up and making boom-boom with loads of fit locals sounds great.

It wasn't so minty for everyone involved, though. Like Cherry: a farm-fresh country boy drafted in 1968. He finds himself assigned to a four man squad containing Ragman (a battle-hardened, takes-no-crap Vietnam vet), Junior (a trash-talking black sniper from the Bronx), and Hoss (a redneck from the Deep South who thinks the Ku Klux Clan are just good ol' boys having fun). If developers Pivotal were playing stereotype bingo they'd have a full house, right here.

Things start with Cherry's arrival at Ghost Town, a US base. It's a glorified tutorial, but the licensed Rolling Stones music and sweary chat establishes atmosphere. You'll conduct jungle patrols, repel the Tet Offensive, and eventually end up stranded behind enemy lines.



Developing your squad's skills is essential, especially if you want your sniper to pick off ambushers



Going into first-person mode triggers a cool blurred vision effect outside of your gun sight

You'll find yourself fighting through villages and temples, but don't kill the locals – this ain't ShellShock

Get too close to an explosion and you'll suffer a cool shellshock effect to your sound and vision

NAM THAT TUNE

The stronger personalities of your buddies mean you care more about developing their skills – and hurt more when they spear their arse on a punji stake trap. Each character must earn his own skill points, so if you only use one soldier the rest of your squad won't gain any new skills.

But Conflict: Vietnam's biggest departure from the Desert Storm games is the setting. While CDS had you fighting through dusty urban streets, Nam's all about the jungle. The early levels still feel very enclosed, though, and sneaking through the bush usually leads you to an invisible wall.

If you stay in the confines of the level you'll find the simplicity of Conflict's command system remains and has been streamlined even further with a context sensitive cursor. No more mucking about, just move the cursor over something and the game will usually anticipate exactly what you want to do.

It's still Conflict, only set in the jungle and polished with some gameplay tweaks. Thing is, with the likes of Battlefield: Vietnam setting the standard for Nam atmosphere, and Full Spectrum Warrior raising the bar for squad-based strategy, we're not sure if Conflict still has the ammunition to take them down. Our hearts and minds are not yet won over. ✷

CONTEXT MESSAGING

The Conflict games have always made orchestrating the carnage easier with an accessible command system.

Conflict: Vietnam takes this to the next level with a context sensitive control system that works brilliantly. Just select a soldier, pop your cursor over whatever you want him to interact with, press the button and he'll do it!

Keep a sharp eye out for booby traps. Trained soldiers will defuse them quicker

When one of your squad bites a sniper's bullet, send out your medic to heal him

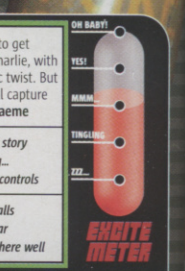
Since you're behind enemy lines you can pick up dropped enemy weapons

CVG OPINION

Bookoo chances to get dinky dawg on Charlie, with a simple strategic twist. But we're not sure if Conflict: Nam will capture the essence of jungle warfare. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Stronger characters and story
- Streamlined strategising...
- ...with context sensitive controls

WE HATE
- Jungles with invisible walls
- Missions feel really linear
- Doesn't nail the atmosphere well



VIEWTIFUL JOE 2

* PUBLISHER CAPCOM
* DEVELOPER CLOVER STUDIOS
* OUT: EARLY 2005

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Capcom's time-twisting beat 'em up Boy Wonder returns for another quirky kung fu quest. Facing a whole new bunch of oddball enemies, this time Joe's got his missus in on the ass-kicking cartoon pandemonium.

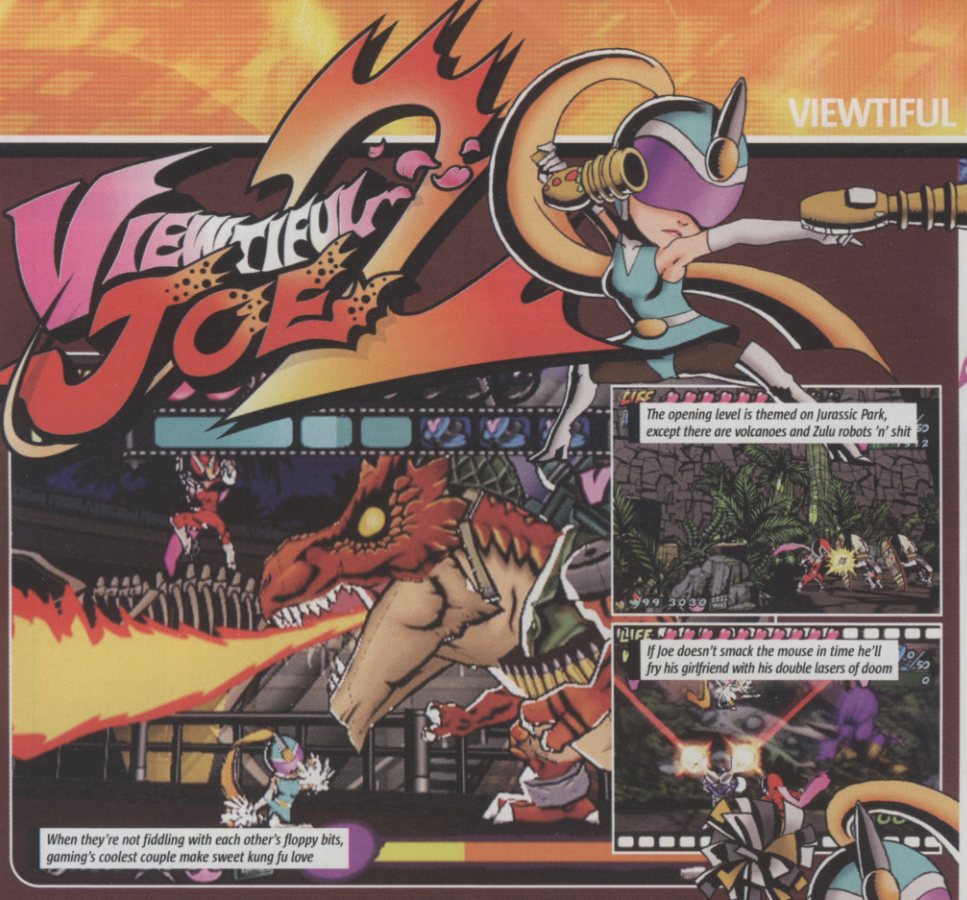
AVAILABLE ON

NINTENDO GAMECUBE

ALSO ON

PS2

WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/CLOVER



When they're not fiddling with each other's floppy bits, gaming's coolest couple make sweet kung fu love

The opening level is themed on Jurassic Park, except there are volcanoes and Zulu robots 'n' shit

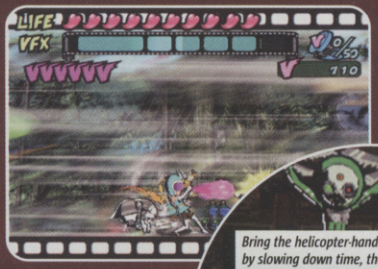
If Joe doesn't smack the mouse in time he'll fry his girlfriend with his double lasers of doom

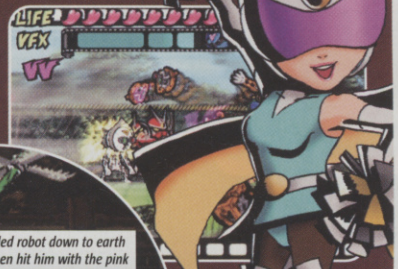
A couple of years ago, 2D side-scrolling actioners were the floppy old peckers of the gaming world. Then along came Viewtiful Joe, injecting an elephant-sized dose of Viagra back into the 2D scene.

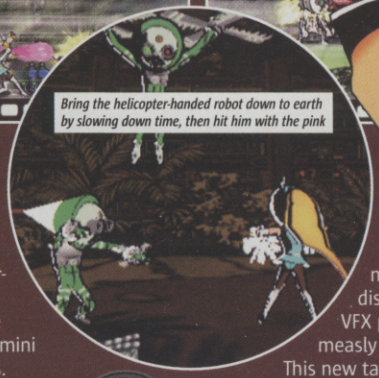
So when Capcom first announced that a follow-up to its insanely fresh fighter was on the horizon, pulses peaked. We were pumped with excitement at the prospect of getting hands-on with all the innovative new features that would no doubt be included in the sequel.

But since then we've had the chance to blaze through a few of the opening stages of VJ2, and were miffed to discover that this feels more like an update than an all-new second chapter.

We're praying that Clover Studios will include some sort of tag-team moves for Joe and Silvia







Bring the helicopter-handed robot down to earth by slowing down time, then hit him with the pink

made to the enemies so that it feels slightly fresher. You'll now have to duck and dive out of the path of dual laser-wielding mechanical mice and fend off the likes of face-hugging mini Matrix-style sentinels.

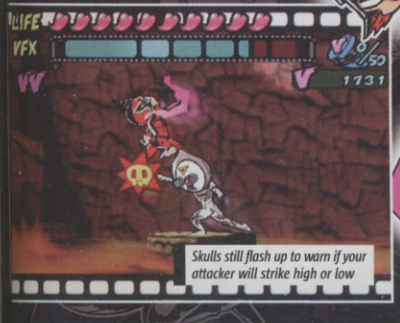
The inclusion of Silvia as an alternative playable character's cool. Taking her into battle enables you to tackle fight scenarios with different tactics, as she's the queen of long-range attacks thanks to her throbbing pink laser weapon.

But the addition of Silvia is no substitute for the distinct lack of new VFX powers. ONE! One measly new ability: Replay. This new talent lets you record an attack, and automatically plays it back three times, unleashing triple the damage. But if you get twatted by an enemy while recording, you'll get a trio of whuppings. It's a decent idea, but it just ain't enough, even for hardcore Viewtiful fans.

However, with Viewtiful Joe 2's mysterious two-player co-operative action still being kept under wraps, Clover Studios could be keeping its top trumps close to its chest. Let's just hope it lays its cards on the table sharpish, before we lose faith in mighty young Joe. *

AVERAGE JOE

We weren't expecting superhuman leaps when it came to graphics, but it looks so damn similar to its predecessor it's untrue. That said, enough tweaks have been



Skulls still flash up to warn if your attacker will strike high or low

CVG OPINION

We're HUGE VJ fans, so to find the sequel skimping on striking new features has left us a little cold. It still feels like VJ, but where's the innovation, people? **Mike**

WE LOVE
- A new wave of weird-ass foes
- Movie-themed environments
- Replay VFX power

WE HATE
- Only one new VFX skill
- No visual upgrades

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

UNDER THE SKIN

* PUBLISHER CAPCOM
* DEVELOPER CAPCOM
* OUT: EARLY 2005

PS2

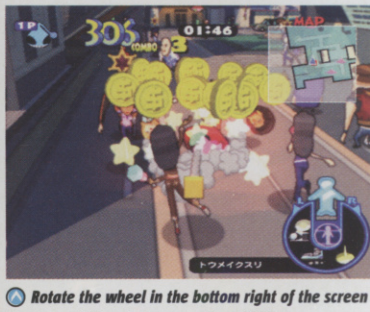
WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP/PANIC

As hilariously hectic as Under The Skin appears, with its slick Viewtiful Joe-inspired visuals and Jet Set Radio-style misfit-stuffed city, the gameplay, unfortunately, is not nearly as mesmerising.

You play Cosmi, a teat-headed ET on a mission to annoy humans so they drop coins that you can collect. When you fire your DNA zapper at a human, you capture a blueprint of their appearance and abilities. Leg it over to one of the many floating UFOs dotted throughout the city and you'll transform into a perfect clone of them.

Each human has a unique set of skills, from pie-tossing policemen to pin-dropping punks. Problem is, it's SO GODDAM SLOOOOW. It feels like you're running through rice pudding. Plus it's too simple – collecting coins is the only objective at the moment. And even though there are stacks of ways to annoy humans, the thrills evaporate within moments of unleashing gimmicky new crowd-peeving attacks. *

Keep switching bodies or you get sussed for creating havoc and hunted down by the mob

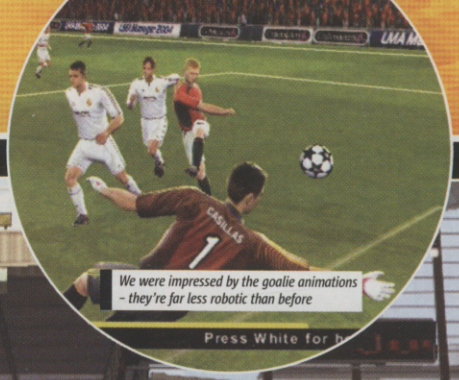


Rotate the wheel in the bottom right of the screen to access different chaos-causing abilities

WE LOVE
- Funkily designed characters
- Tasty soundtrack

WE HATE
- Frightening lack of objectives
- Attacks are too gimmicky
- Insanely slow and often confusing

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...



We were impressed by the goalie animations – they're far less robotic than before

Where the hell is the keeper? You could maybe understand it if it was Jens Lehmann, but it's not

* PUBLISHER
CODEMASTERS
* DEVELOPER
CODEMASTERS
* OUT:
OCTOBER

ONLINE GAMING

x8

IN A NUTSHELL

It had better prospects than Wayne Rooney, but last year's Club Football debut was poor. For this edition, Codemasters has concentrated on making the gameplay feel distinct from Pro Evolution and FIFA.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/CLUBFOOTBALL2005

CLUB FOOTBALL 2005

Codemasters' original plan for Club Football was a matchmaking service involving Pro Evolution Soccer and FIFA. We don't blame them – a footie game that mated the realistic looks of FIFA with the gameplay of PES could have been the ultimate.

Sadly, in the end it wasn't. We've decided to leave the reasons in the past, because today Codies has a game that could stand strong on its own merits. CVG is the only magazine to have played a near final version of Club Football 2005, and it's our pleasure to bring you this exclusive report.

Carlos is looking rather like BB's Marco here. But it could just be the angle

NICE FIRST TOUCH

There needed to be improvements in every area for Club Football. But for us the most important area for attention was control, so we want to talk about this first. Whereas the first CF played like a slow and restrictive interpretation of PES, version 05 has developed an enjoyable style all of its own. There is more free flowing passing and movement than FIFA 04, but less hell-for-leather running with the ball than PES3.

The key has been to improve the initial first touch and the time it takes for a player to distribute the ball. Codemasters learned that the first touch and passing animations in last year's CF were too exaggerated, slowing down the game unrealistically. In CF05 you have freedom to pass the ball the moment you decide to do so. It means that you work the whole

We love the goalmouth scrambles in PES, and this year Club Football has them too!

"YOU HAVE THE FREEDOM TO PASS THE BALL THE MOMENT YOU DECIDE TO DO SO"

Codies are aiming for players to really feel whether a challenge was fair or a foul

Roy Keane looks every inch the unshaven enforcer. It kind of looks like he's just broken his pelvis crossing that ball, though

WATCH ME NOW!

The R2 button is used to modify every ball in CF05, enabling chipped shots, chipped through-balls, grass-cutting passes into the box and the like.

Although we can't vouch for the quality of implementation at this stage, our first try out wasn't bad at all and we look forward to pushing Club Football's limits.

Raul has gone for something weird here. Lehmann doesn't seem to be concerned

Paul Scholes shows us some fancy footwork, holding R2 to chip his shot

Ruud pulls out some mean skills to round the keeper and get a clear scoring chance

Even if you hate van Nistelrooy as a bloke, you gotta love those ker-razy mad skillz

SHOW YOUR TRUE COLOURS

Each version of Club football has a different club on the box, pandering to our insatiable desire to buy things that have the name of our team written on them.

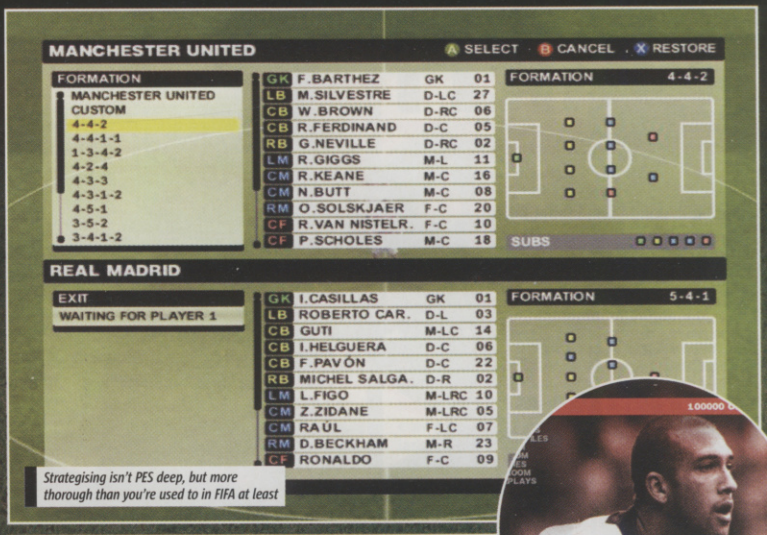
But worry not – all the 250 teams' players and details are accurate, not just those of your club.

Real Madrid's Bernabeu stadium, weirdly enough promoting Codemasters games

Most Man U fans won't recognise this place because they've never ever been (ouch!)

Some Premiership teams' sponsor's logos may be in the wrong place – a legal thing, they say

The detail even extends to the banners in the crowd – they're modelled on the real ones



Strategising isn't PES deep, but more thorough than you're used to in FIFA at least

Unlock memorabilia in the Club Album, with 25 video clips and 40 photos to collect

Breaking down defences should be easier since you can curl balls into the path of your strikers

park instead of feeling trapped in the channels, so you can enjoy the benefits of building attacks at what feels like a natural pace.

LOVING THE BALL

Another major addition to CF is on-the-ball skills. Skill moves allow players to practice and become noticeably better on the ball than a less experienced opponent.

The problem with Club Football before was that the playing field was too level in that respect. Last year we had precisely none to work with, but '05 allows for drag backs and stop-turns, rolling the ball left or right, plus dummying to wrong-foot the other guy, and so on.

Sadly, it doesn't look as though Cristiano Ronaldo-style 'lollipops' (to use a Big Ronism) can be user-controlled, although these may crop up as a player-specific attribute – something the AI might do.

Beckham is more lifelike in this season's game, more alive than in Euro 2004 anyway

NOW THAT'S A GOOD BALL

We're still not done talking about ball control, believe it or not. In our opinion the feature that could really help CF05 is the ability to swerve shots and passes – after touch, in other words. In both PES and FIFA, the only time you get to swerve a ball is from corners or free kicks. The benefit of after touch is that you can perfect a more elaborate passing game, and enjoy beating the keeper with spectacular shots from range.

"THE BENEFIT OF AFTER TOUCH IS THAT YOU CAN PERFECT A MORE ELABORATE PASSING GAME"

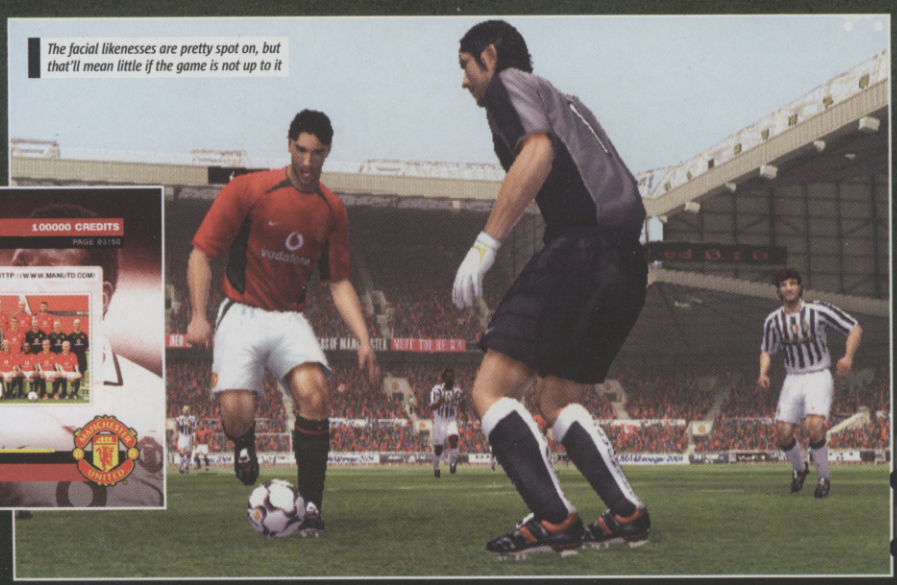
CLUB BEFORE COUNTRY

Club Football is released in about a million different guises, with all of the big clubs getting their very own version. So, if you're a die-hard Gunner, you can get the Arsenal game, meaning all the menus and loading screens will have Gooner-themed gubbins slapped all over them. Codemasters still reckons this club-specific angle is the way to sell the game. It means you get brilliant likenesses of the top players, at least. It also means each version has memorabilia to unlock, which this season includes 25 video clips and over 40 photos.

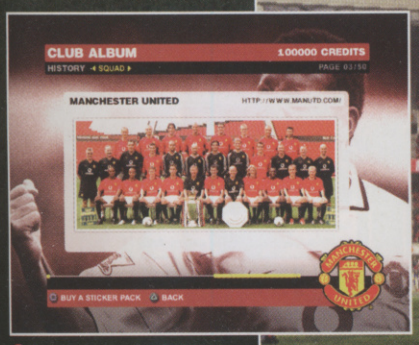
There's also the added gameplay bonus of not only creating yourself as a player, but also spending credit points you earn from winning matches on developing your skills. Then you can experience that moment every fan dreams of – walking out from the tunnel to a tumultuous reception from your hometown club faithful, wearing the hallowed number nine shirt.

At this stage, Club Football is looking promising. What licks balls is the fact you can only compete as club teams, not as national sides. But we can live with that if the gameplay has been properly sorted out. Roll on the new season. ✷

A terrific likeness of Raul. Let's hope he's a better player in here than he was in Portugal



The facial likenesses are pretty spot on, but that'll mean little if the game is not up to it



You can buy packs of stickers, just like Panini, but you run the risk of getting repeats

CVG OPINION The club angle seems worth the asking price this year, and we've higher hopes than we expected for the gameplay after our brief try out. Come on the Codies. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Ball control is improved
- Fan content also better
- Likenesses much closer

WE HATE
- No national sides
- Gameplay still to be proven
- The last game ate turds

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! · YES! · MMM... · TINGLING · ZZZ...

GRADIUS V

* PUBLISHER
KONAMI
* DEVELOPER
TREASURE
* OUT:
TBC

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Konami teams up with Treasure – the undisputed king of the shoot 'em up – to breathe new life into the truly ancient Gradius franchise. Prepare to eat laser death in brilliantly innovative ways.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.KONAMI.COM/GRADIUS5/

This even kills R-Type Final and Ikaruga on looks. It's nothing short of STUNNING!

The blue 'heart' is where you hurt anything in Gradius V that is bigger than you

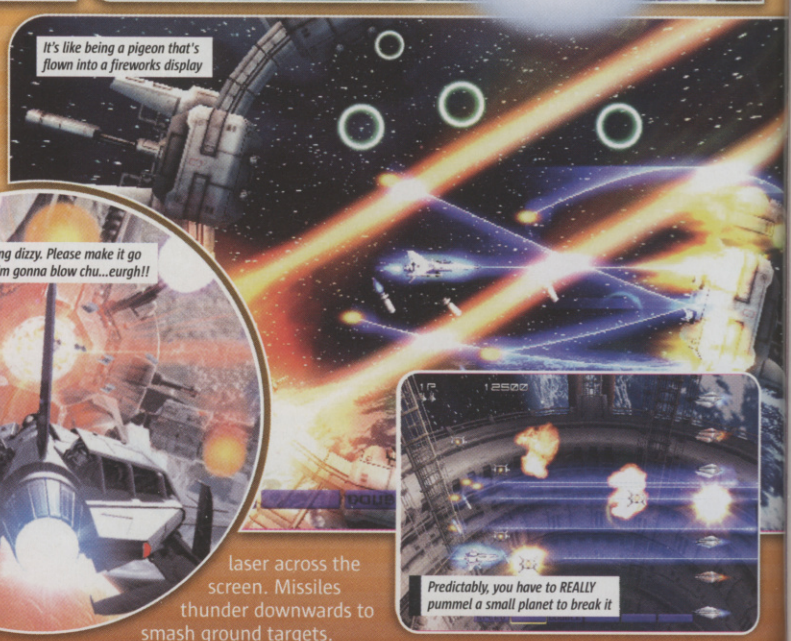
So you think you're good at games? Ha ha. Think again. Even if you can complete Metal Gear with Snake in a jangly Morris Dancer costume or whip GTA III with a Sinclair C5 and a peashooter, Gradius V will serve you your ass on a plate. Freshly kicked, and with a garnish of Screw You.

It's your spaceship against a vicious alien army. They don't mess about either, with the screen permanently pulsing with lethal plasma. Not getting hit is as hard as driving a lorry through a monsoon and not getting it wet. Even on Very Easy mode it's Practically Impossible. Konami's sarcastic little joke, we assume.

When you're tooled up though, there's no better feeling in games. Your ship and four satellites called Options barfing blue laser across the screen. Missiles thunder downwards to smash ground targets. Hundreds of ships arrive on screen to be turned into explosions. It's absolutely beautiful. Get hit though, and all your power-ups are gone.

Yes. You are f-ing expected to get through there. Don't look at us

Ack, feeling dizzy. Please make it go away or I'm gonna blow chu...eurgh!!



It's like being a pigeon that's flown into a fireworks display

Predictably, you have to REALLY pummel a small planet to break it

Smash the red enemies to liberate power-up tokens. Get hard or get killed

CERTAIN DEATH

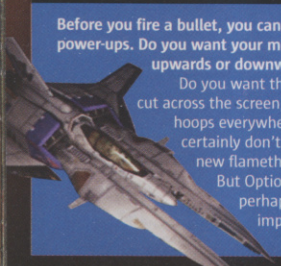
So far so Gradius, but you've never seen bosses like this in a game before. The first – and therefore EASIEST – boss entombs you in a circle. Six turrets above and below vomit spangly hoops of death, and the main boss also scorches a pair of fat lasers across the screen and shoots spreading bullets. Then the whole thing starts to rotate, and you have to dodge the incoming fire from inside the tiny gap between those lasers. It's hypnotic.

Luckily, you have new weapons to call on. Enhanced Option control means you can have those faithful little gun slaves shooting in all directions, or swooping majestically around your ship. Your second weapon is called Player 2. With a second ship on the case, you might actually stand a slim chance of seeing the end of this thing.✷

HEALTHY OPTIONS

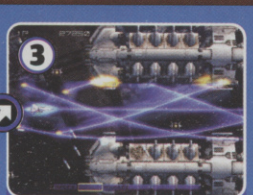
Before you fire a bullet, you can customise your power-ups. Do you want your missiles to fire upwards or downwards?

Do you want thin lasers that cut across the screen, or to spew blue hoops everywhere? You certainly don't want the arse new flamethrower weapon. But Option type is perhaps the most important choice.



Direction: Ideal through thin alleys. Angle the fire upwards and massacre all in your way

Spacing: Squeeze R1 to spread your Options out to deal death across the centre of the screen



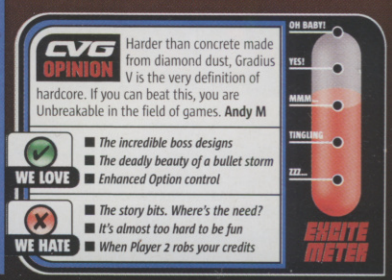
Rotate: Options rotate, acting like a shield and making some seriously sexy laser shapes

CVG OPINION

Harder than concrete made from diamond dust, Gradius V is the very definition of hardcore. If you can beat this, you are Unbreakable in the field of games. **Andy M**

WE LOVE
- *The incredible boss designs*
- *The deadly beauty of a bullet storm*
- *Enhanced Option control*

WE HATE
- *The story bits. Where's the need?*
- *It's almost too hard to be fun*
- *When Player 2 robs your credits*



ROCKY LEGENDS™

- PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
- DEVELOPER: VENOM GAMES
- OUT: OCTOBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Live out the dreams you had as a kid watching those Rocky films, starring in impossibly savage bouts of Hollywood style boxing. This time you can play through the careers of the other fighters Rocky took on in the movies.

AVAILABLE ON

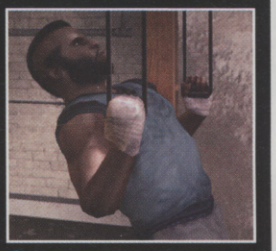
XBOX

ALSO ON

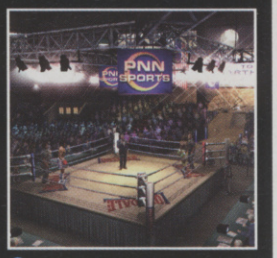
PS2

WWW.UBI.COM/US/GAMES/ROCKEYLEGENDS_PS2.HTM

Using the left analog stick in conjunction of the buttons can unleash a massive range of combos.

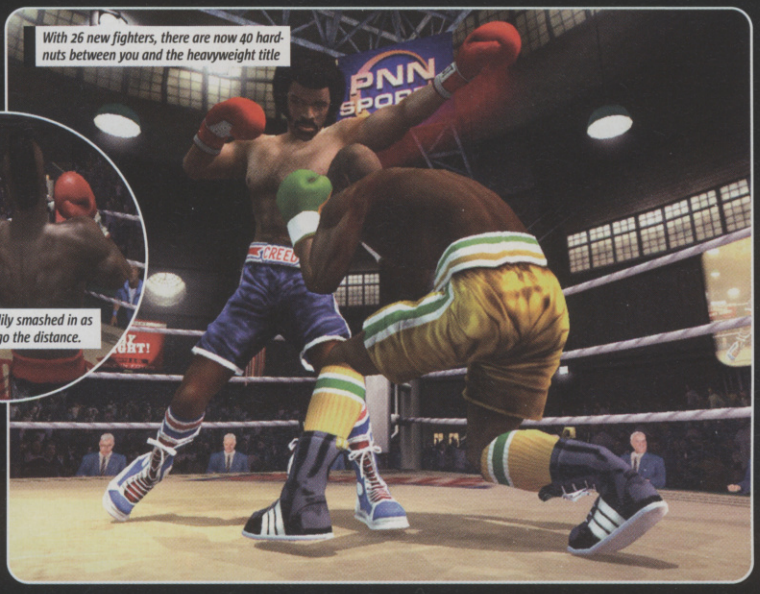


The eight different training games let you build up your stats so you're ready for the next fight



There are now 20 venues to ruck in, from crappy flea pits to more impressive places like this

The first Rocky game was a top class prize fighter on Xbox, winning on points over just about any boxing game on any format. But then Fight Night 2004 got into shape and smashed its way to the top spot with its fantastic double analog stick punch system. So what's the Italian Stallion got left in his locker for this sequel, and is the big Balboa going to reclaim his belt?



With 26 new fighters, there are now 40 hard-nuts between you and the heavyweight title

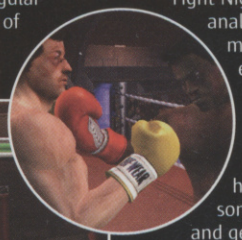
Faces get steadily smashed in as fights start to go the distance.

Legends is hoping to do for boxing what Gran Turismo did for racing – providing such an awesome roller-coaster career mode that the game won't quickly end up on your shelf, only ever getting played when some mates come round.

To do this, it lets you play the careers of the other larger-than-life butt-kickers Balboa came to blows with in the movies. You've got Clubber 'Ah piddy the fool' Lang, Apollo 'I'm sure I've seen him in something else' Creed, and Ivan 'Dolph Who?' Drago . Rocky not only being the name of the films, but also, ironically, describing the supporting actors' subsequent careers.

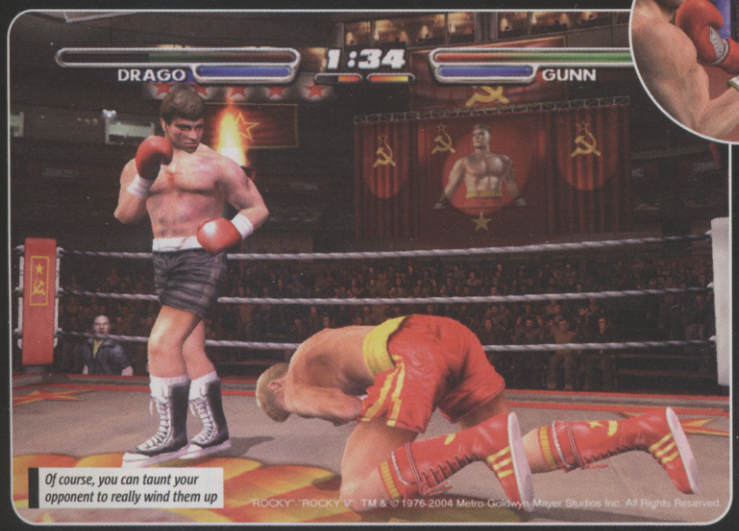
ROCKY ROAD TO SUCCESS

From dingy rat-hole fighting pits, to the arenas of Las Vegas, you'll have to keep improving your man with regular stints in the gym and plenty of time with the training mini-games, if you're to progress.



The fighting system has remained largely unchanged, which is where Legends might have trouble matching Fight Night's twin stick system of analog abuse. Granted, there are more signature punches for each fighter, but punches are still launched from the D-pad buttons, in conjunction with the left stick.

Elsewhere, the visuals have been beefed up, with some awesome facial bruising and general blood-letting. The replays are as bone-crunchingly cinematic as ever, and the soundtrack has a bunch of top tunes from the film series. Round two on how this is shaping up soon. ✳



Of course, you can taunt your opponent to really wind them up

"ROCKY" "ROCKY V" TM & © 1976-2004 Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer Studios Inc. All Rights Reserved.

CVG OPINION

The last game packed a mean punch, so you're guaranteed a heavy hitter. But has it got enough in its locker to take on the awesome Fight Night 2004. **Steve O**

WE LOVE
- Brutal, bloody boxing bouts
- Playing as the bad guys
- In-depth career mode

WE HATE
- Control system that's suddenly beginning to feel a little old
- Where d'ya go with a boxing game?

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

PLAYBOY THE MANSION

- PUBLISHER: UBISOFT
- DEVELOPER: CYBERLORE STUDIOS
- OUT: NOVEMBER

PS2 XBOX CUBE PC

ONLINE GAMING

WWW.CYBERLORE.COM/GAMES/PLAYBOY

Prepare for a game of Sim Titty. Playboy: The Mansion is an empire building sim where your empire is a soft porn mag, and building it up is a case of enlisting ever more top-heavy totty to get 'em out for the lads next to articles on rock climbing and rimming.

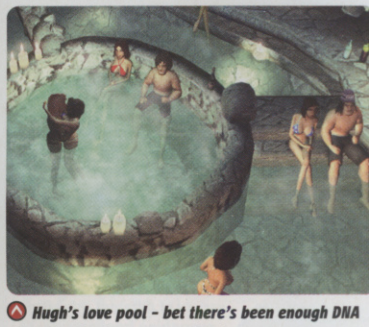
It looks like The Sims, right down to the way you give commands to Hugh 'more poontang than hot dinners' Heffner, looking resplendent in his smoking jacket. The sections where you work out what's going in your magazine sound a little too much like work to us, but it could be an interesting.

As well as putting together your mag, you have to manage Heff's social life, decorating his mansion and throwing parties to influence the rich and famous. That as well as watching scantily clad Playmates jump up and down on a trampoline while standing awfully close.

In concept, this is the best management game ever, but it could well turn out to be a cheap cash-in, albeit with lovely great norks. We'll let you know which when we've seen more. ✳

What a great camera angle! Cleavage Cam

Shit! Look at the fun bags on that!



Hugh's love pool – bet there's been enough DNA deposited in there to map the human genome

WE LOVE
- Living life like Hugh lives it
- Watching trampolining playmates
- Throwing swanky parties

WE HATE
- Not living Hugh's life in reality
- Exploiting women for male titillation. We're disgusted, naturally

EXCITE METER

* PUBLISHER
EIDOS
* DEVELOPER
BEAUTIFUL GAME STUDIOS
* OUT:
AUTUMN

ONLINE GAMING

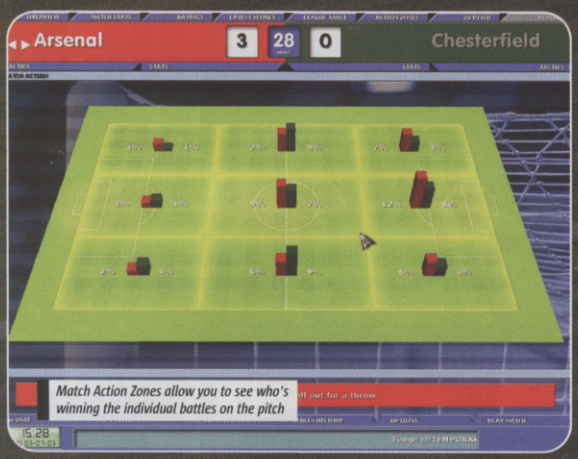
IN A NUTSHELL

It's back, bigger than ever and under new management, essentially a pivotal moment for the series. Will the fans embrace the change of developers or could this be the beginning of the end?

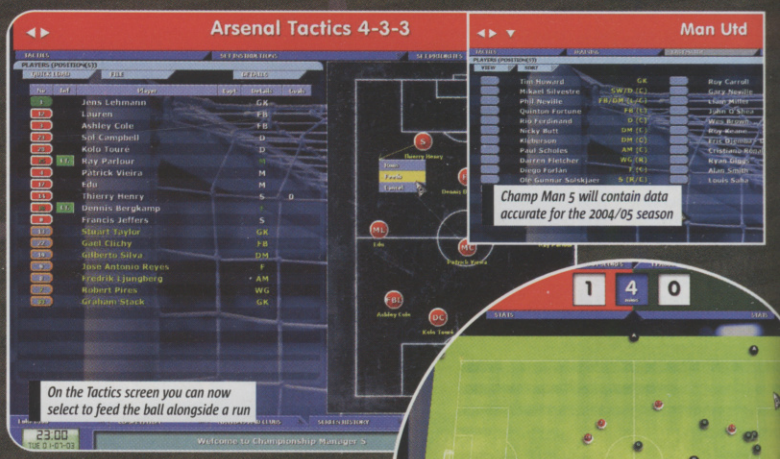
AVAILABLE ON

PC CD ROM

WWW.CHAMPIONSHIPMANAGER.CO.UK



Match Action Zones allow you to see who's winning the individual battles on the pitch



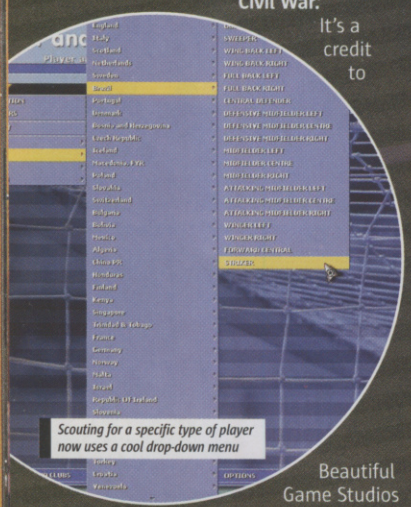
On the Tactics screen you can now select to feed the ball alongside a run

During a match the pitch is now tilted so you can see the height of the ball

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 5

With all the behind the scenes changes encountered by Championship Manager 5, it's a surprise the game doesn't begin with a Star Wars-style crawl of text saying, 'It is a period of Civil War.'

It's a credit to Beautiful Game Studios that there's no need for any such disclaimers. For what is clear the second Champ Man 5 loads, is that the departure of original series developer Sports Interactive hasn't created a period of unrest, but the prospect of an exciting new era instead.


Scouting for a specific type of player now uses a cool drop-down menu

If you're worried that this will be Champ Man by name association only, don't panic. What is evident from our time with the game is that Beautiful Game Studios has done its homework.

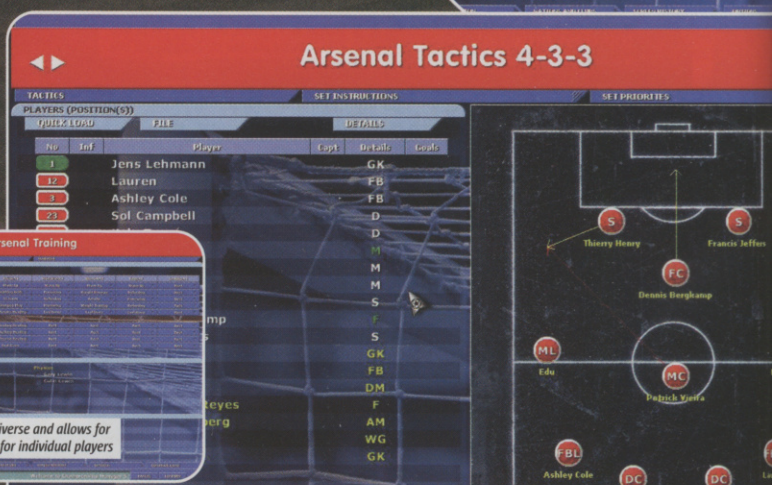
From focus groups to consumer testing, Champ Man 5 is being designed to keep the fans on board and to bring in a new breed of devotees. The change in developer has also brought in some exciting innovations to the series thanks to the title now being designed from the ground up rather than evolved from an older product.

THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!

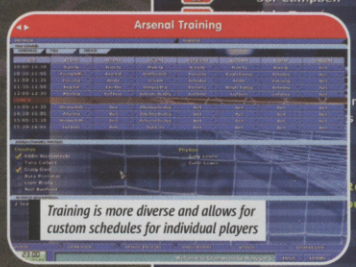
The change in engine is evident the moment you're given the familiar task of picking what leagues you want the game to run and the team you want to play as. In last year's game, Season 03/04, this task resulted in a ten-minute wait as the cogs inside the PC whirred into gear to make calculations.

Even with a state-of-the-art machine, running more than five leagues simultaneously was a heavy burden. The new engine makes light work of 25 simultaneous leagues and has you tinkering with your chosen team in seconds.

Not only is it a remarkable feat that will seem like a Holy Grail to Champ Man fans, but the minimum specification to perform such miracles is currently a P700 with 128MB of RAM! Inside the game other changes are equally impressive.

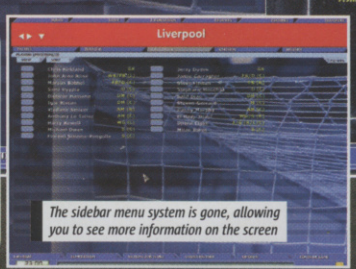


There's more subtlety to player positions within different formations



Training is more diverse and allows for custom schedules for individual players

It's easier than before to compare the attributes of similar players



The sidebar menu system is gone, allowing you to see more information on the screen

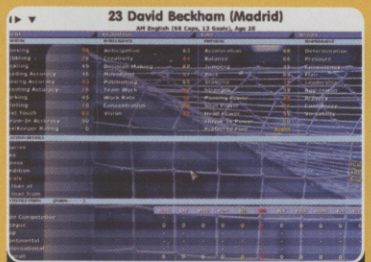
Comparing players is now a doddle, and searching for a specific type of player is easier than ever. On the Tactics screen, not only can you chalk up where players will run to, you can also instruct them where to feed the ball. Nifty, eh? You can even create custom training schedules for individual players. Tip: send Rooney on a 'How To Avoid Eating All The Pies' course.

They're all logical areas of improvement – nothing too radical from what has gone down before, but they are subtle differences that hopefully will create an even more absorbing game and, frighteningly, one that's even more addictive than ever. ✷

STAT ATTACK

For Champ Man 5, even the players have received an overhaul. Previously individual players were rated out of 20 in a variety of different attributes, everything from passing, to flair and stamina.

Not only are there new exciting categories like media and career personalities, but players' attributes are now rated out of 100. This allows a far greater range of player diversity and an even bigger need for good scouts.



He may not be all that bright but Head Power - 51, that's a bit harsh!

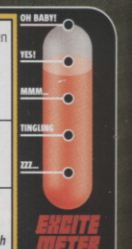
Feinting and First Touch are two important new attributes in Champ Man 5

CVG OPINION

It wasn't broke, but it's been fixed. Champ Man 5 will shock fans with new levels of speed and a host of smart refinements. Fingers crossed it plays well too. **Alex H**

WE LOVE
- Constant gameplay – no more tea breaks waiting for processing
- More control of match day tactics

WE HATE
- Not enough text variety to goals and pieces of skill
- Can't talk to players openly enough



EA SPORTS™ TOTAL CLUB MANAGER 2005

Backroom and training facilities are generic, but of course the stadiums are authentic

Harry, we'd like you to score all our free kicks this season. You Kewell with that?

- PUBLISHER: EA
- DEVELOPER: EA
- OUT: NOVEMBER
- ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Set to embarrass Champ Man's 2D match engine by using the beautiful 3D one from EA's own Euro 2004. The big question will be if it will interfere with the purity of the match statistics as happened in TCM 04.

AVAILABLE ON

PC CD ROM

ALSO ON

XBOX, PS2

WWW.TOTALCLUBMANAGER.COM

Football management is one of the few sporting genres EA didn't originate, but has since taken onboard to pioneer.

There used to be a time that EA sticking its oar in would seem purely cynical, but since FIFA 2004, Fight Night 2004, and the most recent Tiger Woods instalments, we should all think differently. It's clear that EA is back to loving the potential of sport within videogames, and Total Club Manager 2005 is further proof.

LEAPING FROM THE CLIPBOARD

The focus this year has been to "bring the data to life", and you'll be glad to know this extends beyond the pretty presentation. EA admits that the stats in last year's TCM were too simplistic, so the database system has been completely overhauled to be in direct competition with that of Champ Man's. There are 15,000 volunteer 'Club Editors' submitting player info on a year-round basis to EA's TCM database. This data is checked by 100 EA Editors to ensure it's accurate. The fact this data is updated constantly means that all transfer information will be as accurate as possible upon release. When we saw the game back in June, Man Utd already had Gabriel Heinze and Alan Smith on the roster.

LIVING IN THE DUGOUT

Of course the presentation of TCM 05 has been revised, and to a surprisingly extensive degree. EA is now referring to the interface as an Interactive Manager Dugout, requiring a fresh focus not only on the style of menu displayed, but also the info it makes available.

In addition to what you might expect such as fatigue, goals and cards, we especially liked the territorial possession stats allowing managers to really monitor how effectively a player works within his role. Also impressive is the freedom (pressure!) of making substitutions in real-time. In fact, any statistics you wish to examine can be summoned on the fly, without interrupting play.

To further enhance the connection with the players, the choice of touchline shouts has been extended to be more match-specific. You can instruct the lads to play dirty, keep the ball or time waste, to give a few examples.

Finally, we had our concerns on how the match stats could vary from games played using the 3D Match Engine and those delivered as a quick result. Last year the differences were ridiculous, but we have been reassured that such inconsistency is unlikely for TCM 05. ✷

PC POWER

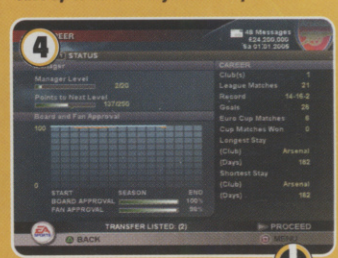
The PC version of TCM 05 stretches its legs out to fill the larger storage space with extra game modes and presentation styles.

You can create your own club from scratch (only English and German, though), and EA claims over 30,000 towns to choose from. There are also 3D match highlights that kick in to show anything significant during a game.

A higher resolution display on PC gives you more of the park to observe

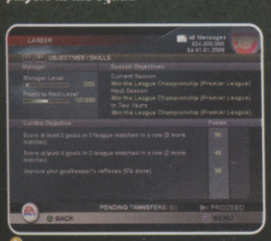
Text updates are reserved only for PC. Memory restricts this on PS2

The console versions allow you to save up to 10 custom formations per team



All versions share the same basic presentation screens and game functions

Improvements include better at-a-glance must-know stats for all players in the squad



The difficulty setting affects the depth of info made available to make your decisions

The team strategy screens on the PC are more detailed than the console versions

CVG OPINION

It's all to play for in football management since the Champ Man team defected to make Football Manager for Sega. So TCM 05 has a realistic shout at top spot. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Real fans provide the data
- Minute detail assisting transfers
- Accessing data on the fly

WE HATE
- Suspicious 3D Match Engine
- No text updates for PS2 version
- Not got a proven track record

SECOND SIGHT

* PUBLISHER
CODEMASTERS
* DEVELOPER
FREE RADICAL
* OUT:
Q3 2004

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Last issue we got all stirred up by the tealeaves at the bottom of Second Sight's spooky gameplay cup. Something compelled us to delve deeper into the paranormal secrets of Codies' tiptoes-and-trigger-finger fest...

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

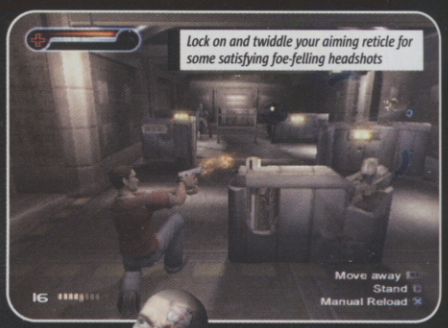
XBOX, CUBE

WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/SECONDSIGHT/

UPDATE

Alongside the controllable camera, you can switch to Resi-style angles for more cinematic shenanigans

Vattic controls beautifully - ducking between cover to blast out enemy brains feels especially intuitive



Lock on and twiddle your aiming reticle for some satisfying foe-felling headshots

You'll think the asylum looks nutty enough from the outside - but just wait till you meet its happy inhabitants

Firefights are fearsomely frantic, with bullets pinging everywhere, shredding the nerves as much as the air

We were so excited by Second Sight when we cast our mentalist third eye over it last issue, we were convinced that someone at Free Radical was twisting our thoughts using their mind-bending psychic powers.

This time though, we've strapped on our lead helmets to be sure we've blocked out any subverting brain-rays and get a closer look at this conspiracy-laden supernatural stealth and shoot 'em up.

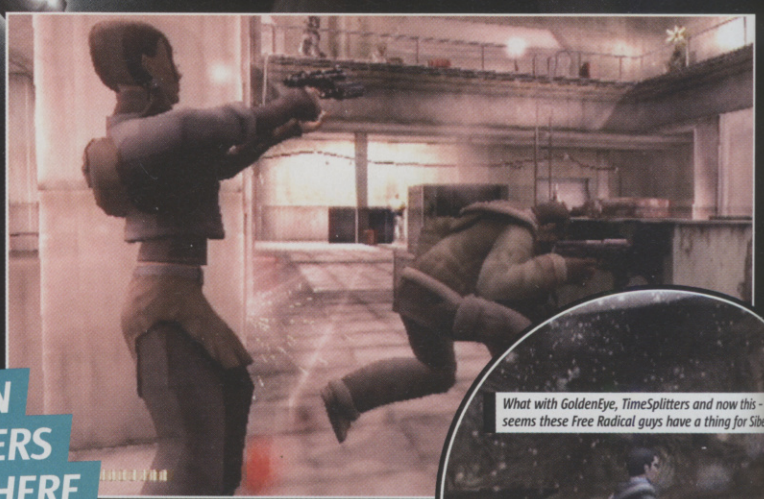
JUMP IN VATT'S FLASH

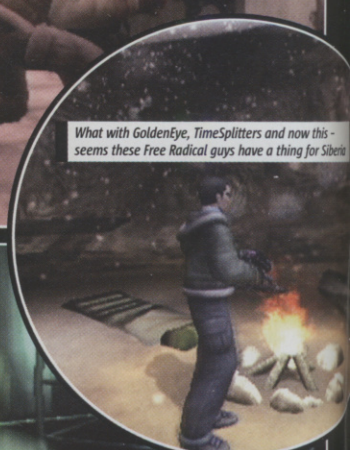
We've played through a whole season's worth of Alias-style plot-twists and paranoia-inducing government tinkering now, and we're STILL dribbling over Second Sight's skilful blend of action and sneakery. Although you'll find a fair mix of both styles throughout the game's many levels, the emphasis shifts depending on the time period they take place in.

You see, after waking up memory-less and balder than a yeti in a candle shop, your character John Vattic not only has to contend with his newfound psychic powers and escape from the shadowy organisation that's shackled him up in a high-security medical facility, but he must grapple with the frequent playable flashbacks of his last military expedition into the snowy wastelands of deepest Siberia.

TIME TO DIE

Once you've played with the game's basic Psi-busting mechanics in the first lab-based level, you're thrust six months back in time to relive your military training. This not only provides you with ample opportunity to brush up on stealth and shooting skills in the lengthy yet invaluable tutorial, but sets the scene for the rest of the game.

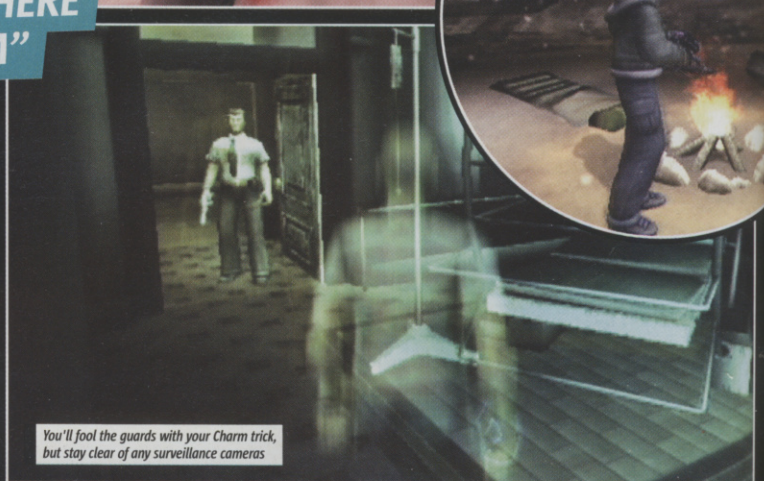




What with GoldenEye, TimeSplitters and now this - seems these Free Radical guys have a thing for Siberia

"FREE RADICAL'S EXPERIENCE IN HI-OCTANE BULLET-BLAZERS CREATES AN EXPERT ATMOSPHERE OF PUMP-ACTION BEDLAM"

Frontline gun-brawls ramp up the tension as your team-mates react realistically to the mayhem



You'll fool the guards with your Charm trick, but stay clear of any surveillance cameras

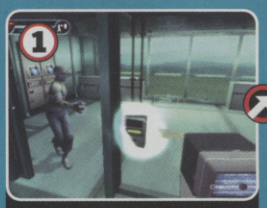
"THE SHEER NUMBER OF POSSIBILITIES CAN BE OVERWHELMING – OCCASIONALLY DILUTING THE FRENETIC FOCUS"

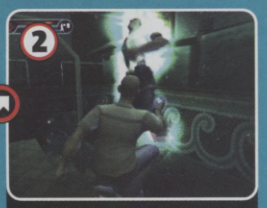
Confining the sniper viewfinder to the corner keeps the pace taught and action uninterrupted

OOP! UP-PSI YOUR HEAD

We covered all the bog-standard Psi powers last issue, including the ultra-handy health-restoring Regeneration and temporary invisibility of Charm.

What's extra cool though is the way your basic abilities get beefed up the deeper into the conspiracy you delve, giving you more brain-bulging ammo to tackle the obstacles ahead. Scope out this lot...



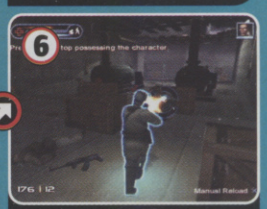


At first Telekinesis only lets you mess with wee objects

As you progress you get to hoist and hurl heavier stuff...

...pluck pure energy out of the air to lob at your foes...

...knock out entire rooms with a massive bolt of power...



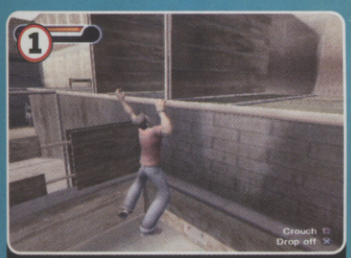
... and project out of your body to sneak through lasers

Eventually, you can even possess foes with your aura!

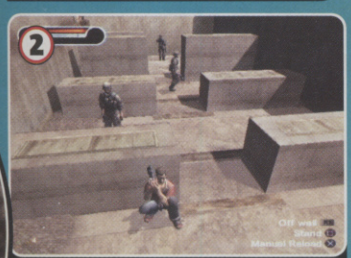
LET'S GET PHYSICAL

Early on, you'll be hurled back through the mists of memory to a top-secret military base where you'll collect your fateful orders from top brass.

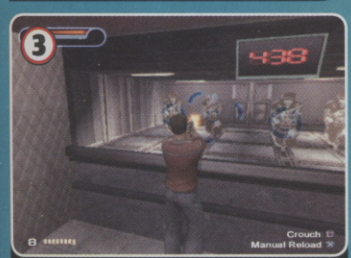
Here you'll learn all of Vattic's soldiering skills, from climbing and swinging to sneaking and shooting, all smartly woven into the story. It's tutorial-tastic!



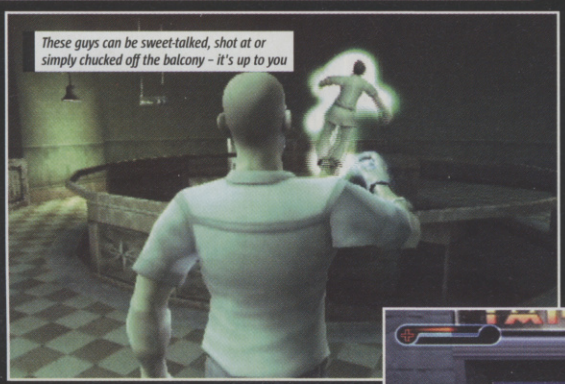
Your training kicks off by testing your agility and acrobatic panache – you'll be prancing like a pro in no time



Next up, you'll learn the basics of using cover and gliding silently past oblivious enemy guards. Shh!



Finally, there's gun fun to be had down the firing range – you'll be blasting, sniping and targeting your way to success


These guys can be sweet-talked, shot at or simply chucked off the balcony – it's up to you

Levels alternate between your search for the truth behind Vattic's incarceration in the present and your fateful final mission to uncover the grisly psychic research of a nefarious rogue scientist in the past. Later levels are more action-based, full of frenzied set pieces meant to get both your adrenaline and trigger finger pumping, but present day levels boast a more free-roaming structure, demanding careful combinations of your many Psi skills and stealth to proceed.

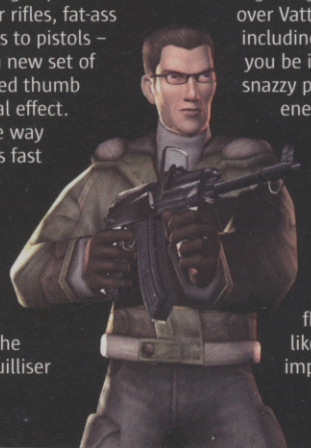
Check out the playable arcade machines – this kind of stuff makes us go all giddy

Stinky bogs on the wall, we can handle. Sticky white stains on the floor, we can't

PERFECT POPPIN'

Right now, the flashback sequences are the slicker, more enjoyable segments, as Free Radical's experience in hi-octane bullet-blazers creates an expert atmosphere of pump-action bedlam. There's a ton of meaty weapons to lock and load during the huge open-air stand-offs, from sniper rifles, fat-ass guns and tranquillisers to pistols – each often requiring a new set of intuitively implemented thumb skills to wield with real effect.

What's great is the way the unfolding action is fast and frantic but allows some creativity as to how you tackle missions. During one trek into a disused rail bunker we could either take out all the guards in the building with a tranquilliser gun and proceed peacefully, or raise the roof with a rifle and go gung-ho gun crazy as enemy reinforcements pour in.



LOOK MA, NO HANDS!

We're not as convinced by the claustrophobic present day stealth stuff just yet though. You'll move from the medical facility out to a spooky lunatic asylum, piecing together your missing memories, breaking out an old colleague and getting your paranormal pecker up over Vattic's niftier abilities – including aura projection that lets you be in two places at once, and a snazzy possession trick that forces enemies to do your bidding.

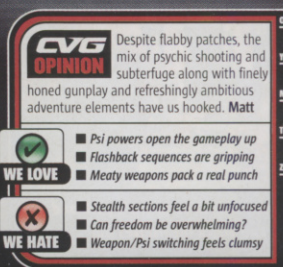
While we love the freedom you're given to tackle the obstacles ahead, the sheer number of possibilities can be overwhelming, occasionally diluting the frenetic focus found in the flashback sequences. We'd like to see Free Radical implementing some more ability-specific puzzles to reign in the action and pick up the slack a bit.

So, psychic stunner or a slimy blob of ectoplasmic toss, or neither? If you've got the gift, you'll already know –everyone else'll just have to wait for our final verdict in next month's review. Meanwhile, we're going back to play some more. Between this and Psi-Ops (reviewed p86), we reckon something's already starting to rub off on us – or maybe you didn't have to be psychic to forsee England getting its arse kicked in the footie, rugby, tennis and cricket this Summer. ✶

CVG OPINION Despite flabby patches, the mix of psychic shooting and subterfuge along with finely honed gunplay and refreshingly ambitious adventure elements have us hooked. **Matt**

WE LOVE
- *Psi powers open the gameplay up*
- *Flashback sequences are gripping*
- *Meaty weapons pack a real punch*

WE HATE
- *Stealth sections feel a bit unfocused*
- *Can freedom be overwhelming?*
- *Weapon/Psi switching feels clumsy*



SHADOW OF ROME™

* PUBLISHER
CAPCOM
* DEVELOPER
CAPCOM
* OUT:
EARLY 2005

ONLINE GAMING

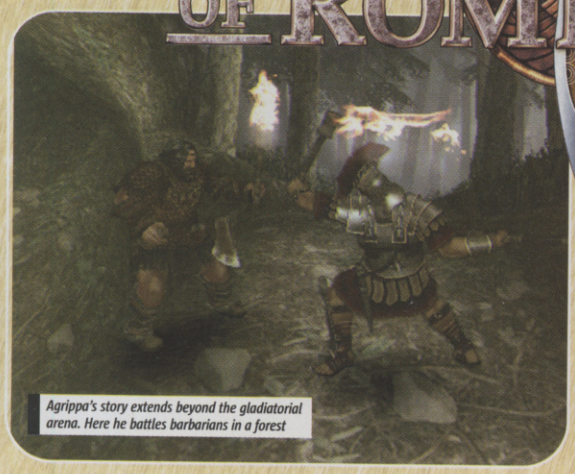
IN A NUTSHELL

Capcom's ancient Roman thriller unleashes brutal fighting and slippery stealth action exclusively on PS2. If you thought Russell Crowe was badass in Gladiator, you ain't seen nothing yet.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.CAPCOM.CO.JP



Agrippa's story extends beyond the gladiatorial arena. Here he battles barbarians in a forest

You might not have heard of Keiji Inafune, but you'll definitely know the fella's handiwork. Inafune boiled up the Onimusha series in that big ol' brain of his, and his latest creation, Shadow Of Rome, has got us tent-poling our togas with excitement.

Capcom's colossal epic uses a modified Onimusha 3 engine, but instead of slinky samurai action this is a mix of raw gladiatorial butchery and ancient super stealth.

The twist-heavy plot switches the action between two main characters: hulk battler Agrippa and sneaky lady-boy Octavianus... *

AGRIPPA

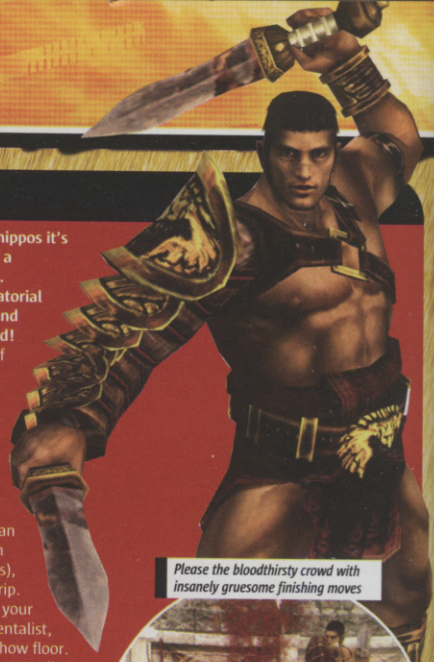
With biceps the size of baby hippos it's little surprise that Agrippa's a professional pain merchant. You swagger into the gladiatorial arena and Agrippa moves and feels just like he looks – hard!

The combat in Shadow Of Rome is already astonishingly solid. You wrestle a sword off a weaker enemy and then hack his head off with it. The crowd roars wildly when you pick his severed melon off the dusty ground and hold it up for approval.

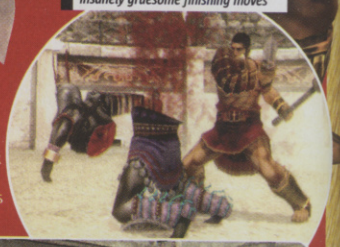
They shower the arena with rose petals and lob a massive mace into the killing field. You need both hands to pick it up. See, you can hold different weapons in each hand (you can even beat enemies with their hacked off limbs), but the larger killing tools require a double grip.

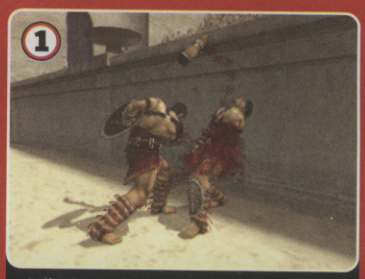
Once you've mashed some midgets with your giant mace and battered a chain-swinging mentalist, a huge freak twice your size bursts onto the show floor. Bugger, your mace has busted after too much pounding and the only weapon you've got is a wee dagger.

The hulk swings at you, clubbing you square in the mush, staining the arena with blood. But he's slow, and the next time he swings, you dodge, leg it behind him, kick him in the back of his leg forcing him to his knees before finishing him off by plunging your blade into the back of his neck and tearing it down to his bum crack.



Please the bloodthirsty crowd with insanely gruesome finishing moves





1

A dirty great spurt of crimson blood erupts every time you hack off a limb

2

Once you've kebabed an enemy you can lift them up off the ground with the spear

OCTAVIANUS

He may look like he's just stepped out of a L'Oreal advert with those coiffed silky blond locks, but Octavianus isn't afraid to ruffle his barnet and get seriously vicious on his stealthy quest through ancient Rome.

Octavianus's skills feel like a blend between Solid Snake and Agent 47 from Hitman. He creeps around, peeking round corners and hiding in stuff like giant pots, but he can also pinch enemy outfits and use plenty of disguises.

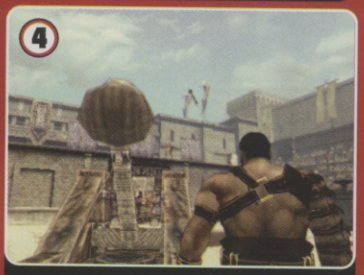
He doesn't use regular weapons to take out enemies. He'll savagely strangle them with rope rather than stab them with swords. That'd be too conspicuous. He's also a master of laying traps and causing cunning distractions using stuff he finds lying around.

1

Unfortunately, you can see up Octavianus's skirt when he's crouching. One for the ladies, maybe

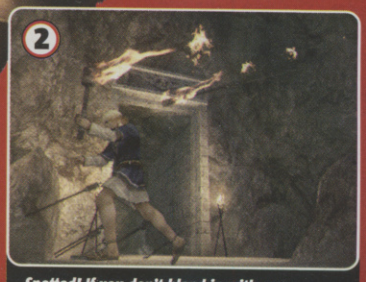
3

There are close range grappling moves, like this belly-to-back WWE-style suplex



4

The arena's full of toys, from little rocks to boulder-slinging catapults



2

Spotted! If you don't blend in with your surroundings, enemies will hunt you down

3

Use the Roman guard outfit to go unnoticed, then knock out your foe with an antique jug

5

The gauge in the bottom right is your crowd-pleasing bar. Don't let them get bored!

6

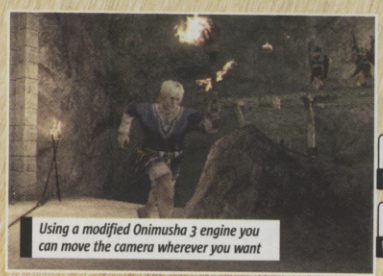
You can knock off pieces of armour and use them to protect your own chunky ass

4

Drop a banana skin in someone's path and they'll slip and knock themselves out

5

Get in some target practice with the darts before you start lobbing them at enemies



Using a modified Onimusha 3 engine you can move the camera wherever you want

CVG OPINION

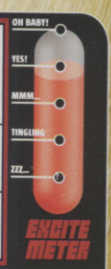
Even though it's still an age from completion, Shadow Of Rome's gruesome combat and stealth sections are already rock solid and awesomely entertaining. **Mike**

WE LOVE

- Brilliantly brutal fighting
- Masses of mean weapons
- Dropping banana skins

WE HATE

- Stealth not as strong as the combat
- The fights are in danger of becoming repetitive



* PUBLISHER
EA
* DEVELOPER
EA REDWOOD
* OUT
5 NOVEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

It's the Sims yanked out of dull suburban domesticity and slammed into the cool-as-funk cultural melting pot of the big city. More messing around with mates, and less going to the toilet and cleaning plates.

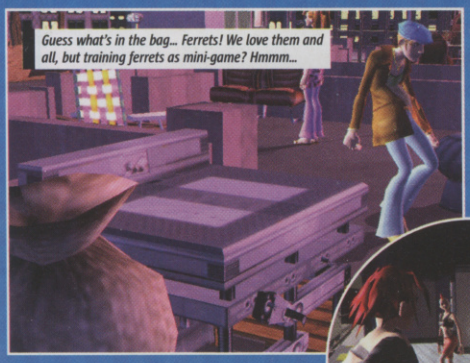
AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

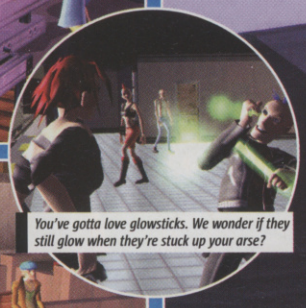
ALSO ON

PS2, CUBE, GBA

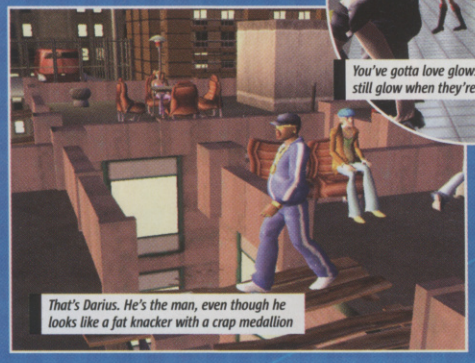
WWW.URBZSIMS.COM



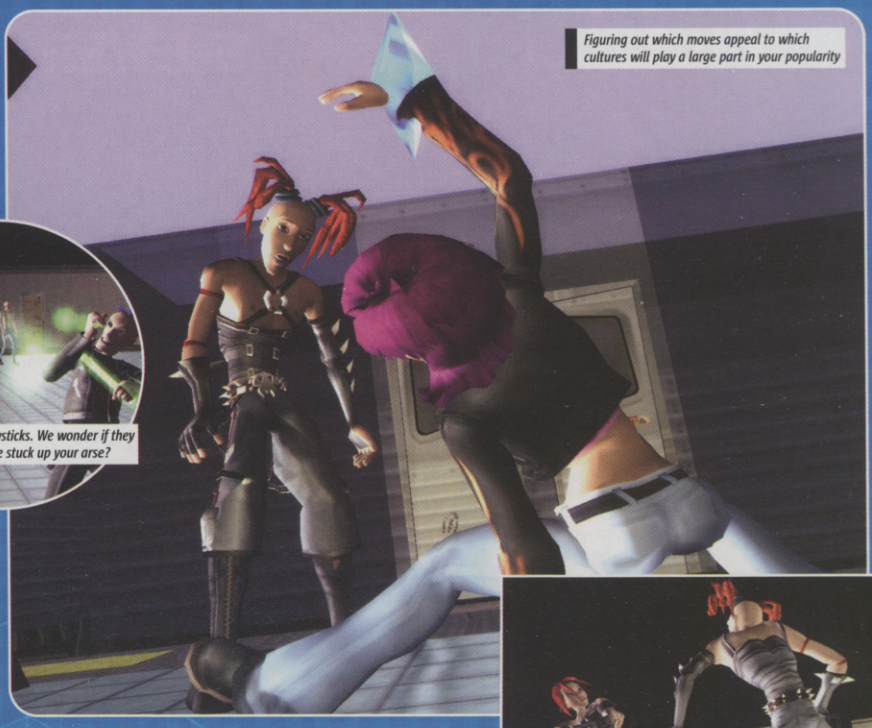
Guess what's in the bag... Ferrets! We love them and all, but training ferrets as mini-game? Hmmm...



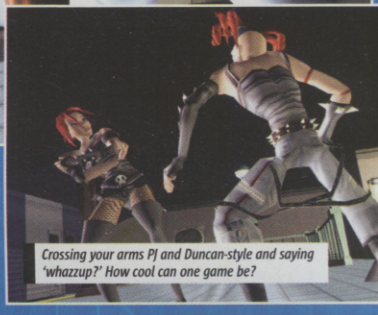
You've gotta love glowsticks. We wonder if they still glow when they're stuck up your arse?



That's Darius. He's the man, even though he looks like a fat knacker with a crap medallion



Figuring out which moves appeal to which cultures will play a large part in your popularity



Crossing your arms PJ and Duncan-style and saying 'whazzup?' How cool can one game be?

CULTURE SHOCK

What's the worst thing about living in the city? Mentalists. They're everywhere, especially in The Urbz.

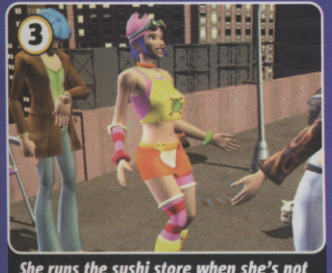
A unique gang live in each of the nine areas and you'll need to chum up with them all to impress Pop Idol reject Darius. Only joking, Darius is the tracksuit-wearing, bling-blingin' top dawg in the city, not a smarmy Scottish streak of pish. Shame.

1

Punks headbutt each other as a greeting. Honest. Try it next time

2

Technos listen to stupid music, wear stupid clothes and eat disco biscuits



3

She runs the sushi store when she's not impersonating Space Channel 5's Ulala

THE URBZ: SIMS IN THE CITY

Would you admit to playing The Sims? Would you brag to your mates about making friends with Mortimer Goth and saving up to buy a new bookcase? It's as addictive as crack, but it's not really cool, is it?

Well, dude, check this out: we can tell The Urbz is going to make The Sims cool because it's got a 'z', there's some hip-hop on the soundtrack, and it's got some punks in.

On top of that it's all set in the city. Cool! You'll style-up your Urb with a whole new create-a-character mode, choose which of the nine areas you want to hang with, then get all city slicker on the scene. Swish!

The Sims values possessions and wealth, but The Urbz is all about reputation. As you impress people your rep will grow, allowing you access to new areas and the hottest spots in the city.

You'll have to move between areas and cosy up to the different sub-cultures like a back-stabbing, bitchy Big Brother contestant.

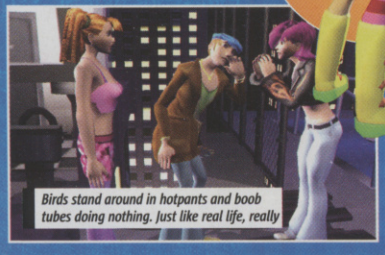
And since every area is populated with a bunch of fantastically stereotyped folk, you'll have to think carefully about how to hook up friendships. Flipping out with glow-sticks will make pals with the Technos, but it'll get you a twatted eye from the Bikers.

Worming your way into the different social scenes opens up new objects, new environments and new jobs. Your success at work depends on playing mini-games to chop sushi, fix up illegal fireworks, or stick bits of metal into mentalists at the piercing parlour.

You'll still need to make sure your character doesn't piss themselves or stink like a rat's arse, but the constant taking care of your Urb has been toned down. Who wants to be crimping off a crap when you could be breakdancing to some phat beats?

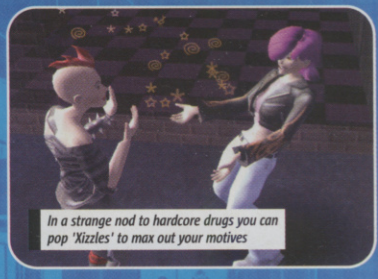
Alright, alright... The Urbz is not cool. It's trying too hard, like that fat loser kid who dyes his hair and thinks he's Eminem.

Whatever. The Sims has NEVER been cool, but if The Urbz manages to balance the new structure with the reduced nannying and house-building stuff we'll still be playing. *

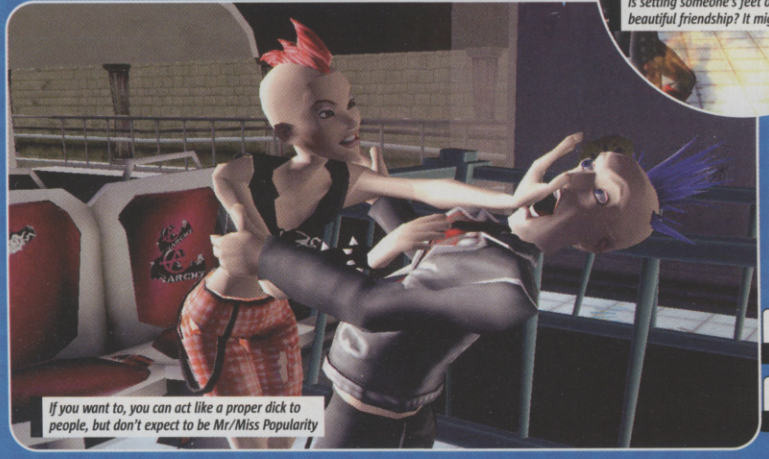


Birds stand around in hotpants and boob tubes doing nothing. Just like real life, really

Is setting someone's feet on fire the start of a beautiful friendship? It might be in the Urbz



In a strange nod to hardcore drugs you can pop 'Kizzles' to max out your motives



If you want to, you can act like a proper dick to people, but don't expect to be Mr/Miss Popularity

CVG OPINION

Ridiculously uncool, but the new environments and features – together with less housekeeping – could give the tired Sims-style gameplay a kick up the arse. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Better looking character models
- Mini-games for skills and jobs
- Nine distinct areas to explore

WE HATE
- The city's not free-roaming
- Simplified Sims gameplay
- Def-o NOT cool

McFARLANE'S EVIL PROPHECY

- PUBLISHER KONAMI
- DEVELOPER KONAMI
- OUT: SEPTEMBER

PS2

x4

WWW.KONAMIHWI.COM /EVILPROPHECY/

You know how it is. One day ALL the forces of evil decide to have a party and mankind sure as hell ain't invited. Fortunately, four heroes, based on Todd McFarlane's line of toys, are gatecrashing with guns and grizzly gizmos.

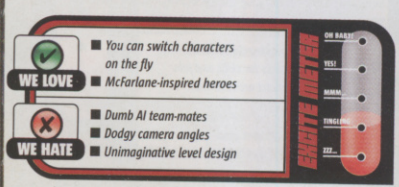
It's a third-person slash 'em up where you bowl around bustin' monster ass, dishing out bad boy combos and special attacks. You have four characters under your control and can change between them at any time using the D-pad. As you progress, more demon-deckin' weapons become available; just make sure you pair the right hero with the right weapon otherwise you'll be up shit creek without a chainsaw.

There's also a hint of strategy, not often found in monster-mashing massacres. Problem is, while you're getting chewed to pieces like a soft toy in a rabid hell-dog's mouth, your team-mates kick back and watch gormlessly like a brain-dead Trisha audience. ✷

Unleashing a flurry of ass-kickin' blows results in a huge hit-combo. Use it to power up your character

"Look guys, I know I said four's a crowd, but I was just kidding! You gotta help me!"

The chainsaw causes serious carnage, but your character has to be strong enough to wield it



- PUBLISHER NINTENDO
- DEVELOPER NINTENDO
- OUT: Q4 2004

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

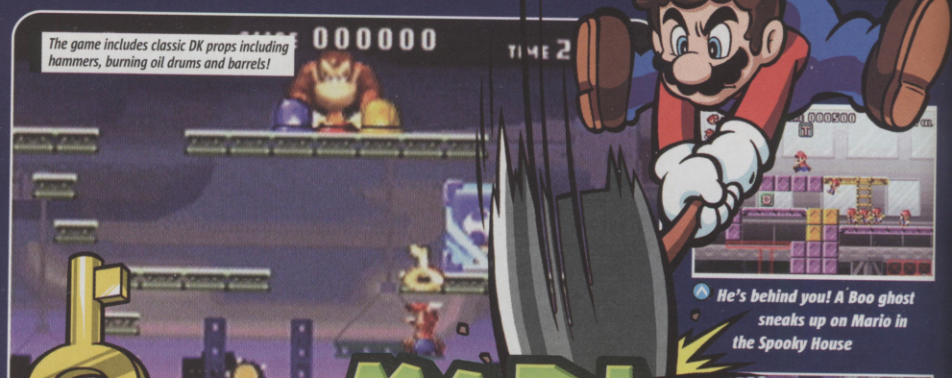
Mario Vs. Donkey Kong is a super-addictive puzzle/platformer mixing gameplay elements from the Mario and Donkey Kong games. Sumptuous cartoon graphics and wicked sound effects, speech and music.

AVAILABLE ON

GAME BOY ADVANCE

WWW.NINTENDO.COM

MARIO VS. DONKEY KONG



The game includes classic DK props including hammers, burning oil drums and barrels!

He's behind you! A Boo ghost sneaks up on Mario in the Spooky House

Everyone enjoyed a good laugh at Donkey Kong's monkey nuts. Rather than eating them

Forget Muhammad Ali vs George Foreman in Zaire, THIS is the real Rumble in the Jungle!

In the blue corner, plucky Italian plumber Mario; in the red, brutish barrel-throwing sour grape-ape Donkey Kong! Over a year since we first played Mario Vs. Donkey Kong at E3 2003, all the signs are suggesting that this Technicolor platform puzzler could be a knockout hit for Nintendo.

Donkey Kong has stolen all the Mini-Mario clockwork toys in Mushroom Kingdom and it's up to the real Mario to get them back by negotiating eight fiendish timed levels set in six familiar worlds such as a haunted mansion packed with Boo ghosts and Fire Mountain, hot with flowing lava and molten rocks.

It's-a Mini-Me! Six cute Mini-Marios follow you through later levels

Grab the clockwork Monchee's tails to hitch a ride across perilous pitfalls. You big swinger

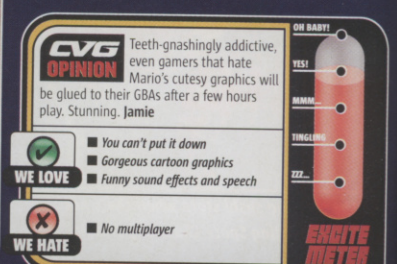
PLATFORM SHOES

Using Mario's trademark special moves, as well as spring jumps, elevators, conveyor belts, wires and coloured switches that reveal different red, yellow and blue platforms, you must first collect a key and open a door to a second room that houses the trapped toys. If you manage to break each of them free from their crystal balls you'll reach two ingenious bonus levels where you then have to carefully guide all six of the miniature Marios to the safety of the toy box, before a final showdown with the banana-scoffing pukka primate himself.

Whoo-hoo! The smooth graphics are amongst the best in any GBA game

The springs make a very satisfying comedy BOIIING noise when you jump on them

With awesome animation (think Rare's Donkey Kong Country, but ten times better), fantastic speech and comedy sound effects, funky music and that addictive must-have-one-more-go magic dust sprinkled on by Miyamoto himself, this could be one of the best Mario games ever. We'll find out with a full gloves-off fight report in CVG very soon... ✷



SEGA SUPERSTARS

This is why we don't let Grazza out of the office without his reigns on

Collect the Emeralds to burst into searing Super Sonic speeds – gameplay stays the same though

Jazz hands, air punches and big girly slaps all work as perfect alternatives to Samba's maracas

Ignore that white text, it's all fancy development stuff – running down this tube is all you'll do though

* PUBLISHER
SEGA
* DEVELOPER
SONIC TEAM
* OUT:
AUTUMN

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Sonic Team's aiming to shake up the EyeToy market with its collection of arm-waving mini-games, all inspired by Sega's back-catalogue of awesome gaming greats. From Sonic to House Of The Dead, they're all here.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.SEGA.COM/GAMES

UPDATE

STARS IN OUR EYES

Sega's given us some tantalizing hints about the short-list of titles likely to make up the final roster of mini-games.

We know the names Sonic Team's been toying with, but nothing's been officially announced yet. So we've gathered up the possibilities and tossed in some suggestions of our own about making them EyeToy-riffic. You listening, Sega?

CRAZY TAXI

Race through the streets in your big yellow cab and avoid traffic pile-ups to reach your customers' destinations in time – maybe. Steer with your arms and perhaps even use as well-timed clap to get that suspension working and leap into the air.

SPACE CHANNEL 5

Think Aerobics in Space here – dance along with everyone's favourite intergalactic hottie, Ulala, and stretch UP, DOWN, LEFT, RIGHT, CHU! CHU! CHU! to keep up with the swinging Sixties beat. Could be a little on the strenuous side, but all good exercise.

CHU CHU ROCKET

The original puzzle mechanics are a bit fiddly for a proper conversion so we're reckoning on something more minimalist – unleash a stream of rodents and bounce them off your fists to guide them back to their rocket ship, avoiding the feline menace.

NiGHTS

We've been gagging for a next-gen update of this fan boy fave for ages. We've got a feeling this'll be another into-the-screen game, ala Sonic, with you wafting about to steer through the approaching hoops and rack up those precious points.

BILLY HATCHER

Another Sonic-style mini-game? Steer your egg along a set course, possibly by movements of your ears. Collect food and avoid enemies to keep it from cracking – either end the level by reaching the goal, or nourish it enough to hatch it open.

SUPER MONKEY BALL

Use your arms to tilt the platform and roll your little simian friend across the finish line, maybe? A Super Punchout-style Monkey Fight would be wicked though – finally, we'd get to smack the stupid smirk off that fat furry ape's face.

PUYO POP

Not sure how this Tetris-y puzzler might work with all its frantic block shifting and turning. Set the coloured bubbles adrift on the screen though and clap to pop them in order, before the time runs out, and we might be onto something...

VIRTUA STRIKER

Stand in goal and block the balls streaming past your fevered brow, probably. Something a bit more complex would be nice, but you'd have to stand a hell of a way back to get in any kicking action. And who would want to have to do all that running as well?

Like a red-hot babe wearing a biodegradable jumpsuit, every passing day reveals more juicy morsels about Sonic Team's plunge into the crazy limb-flailing world of EyeToy.

Pull an angry face like this and the monsters'll run off screaming like girls. Not really

Mike gives these two ugly muthas a good fisting from behind – look at that Zen-like calm

Delving into Sega's enviable back catalogue of triple-A franchises, Superstars features a whole host of mini-games inspired by some of gaming's greatest creations, all given a tasty EyeToy twist. Sonic Team's keeping tight-lipped over the finished line-up but reckon the final tally will be at least 12. So far, House Of The Dead, Sonic Adventure, Virtua Fighter and our favorite Samba de Amigo are all dead certs and we've gurned and wafted our way through every darn one.

CHRONIC SONIC

Surprisingly, Sonic's the weakest game at the moment. It doesn't get much fancier than tossing your arms about to get the blue fella dashing around a long pipe, collecting rings and emeralds – pretty cool at first, but gets old pretty quickly.

House Of The Dead and Virtua Fighter are looking much better, though. In House, you'll be guided through spooky environments, beating off any brain-hungry zombies that shamble into your path. Bigger enemies require more fist power to bring down, so you've got to be pretty slap-happy to survive. Keep your mitts off the civilians that pop up, mind – unless you want a palm print around your chops and another notch off your life bar.

Shield yourself in the right place, when you're prompted, to avoid a right good pulping

Virtua Fighter sees you facing off against some familiar faces, following the on-screen prompts in order to successfully block and counter-punch the volley of blows that your opponents dish out. Manage to score a KO and it's wash, rinse and repeat.

SAMBA SHAKE UP

The real selling point for us right now though is Samba de Amigo – a near-perfect reproduction of the rhythm-action Dreamcast classic, minus the maracas peripheral, obviously. Queue the salsa music and watch the balls fly out from the screen-centre to six surrounding rings – you'll need to smack the rings at the same time as the balls to keep up the beat. The music selection's massive and all the old faves like Livin' la Vida Loca and the them from Austin Powers make an appearance. If you've not played Samba before, trust us when we say it's more fun than a groin inspection from Nurse CVG.

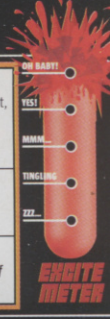
Before, Superstars was looking like a cool but lightweight addition to the EyeToy library, but the inclusion of Samba has rocketed it right up our most-wanted list. If all the mini-games can match the sheer addictive joy of everyone's favourite salsa monkey, then this could end up being something very special indeed. ✷

CVG OPINION

Superstars is showing lots of promise on the fun front, and Samba's an absolute five-star blast. What else have they got stashed in their secret Sega sack? **Matt W**

WE LOVE
- Samba! Samba! SAMBA!!
- Faithful to the originals
- It's great seeing old faves again

WE HATE
- Sonic's wasted in his game
- Samba aside, it's pretty basic stuff
- Watching our own ugly mugs



NBA Ballers

* PUBLISHER MIDWAY
* DEVELOPER MIDWAY
* OUT: SEPTEMBER

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

The original attitude hoops game was Midway's NBA Jam, and then it was EA's NBA Street giving it basketball with the outrageous characters. And now up steps Ballers, hoping to steal NBA Street's fire.

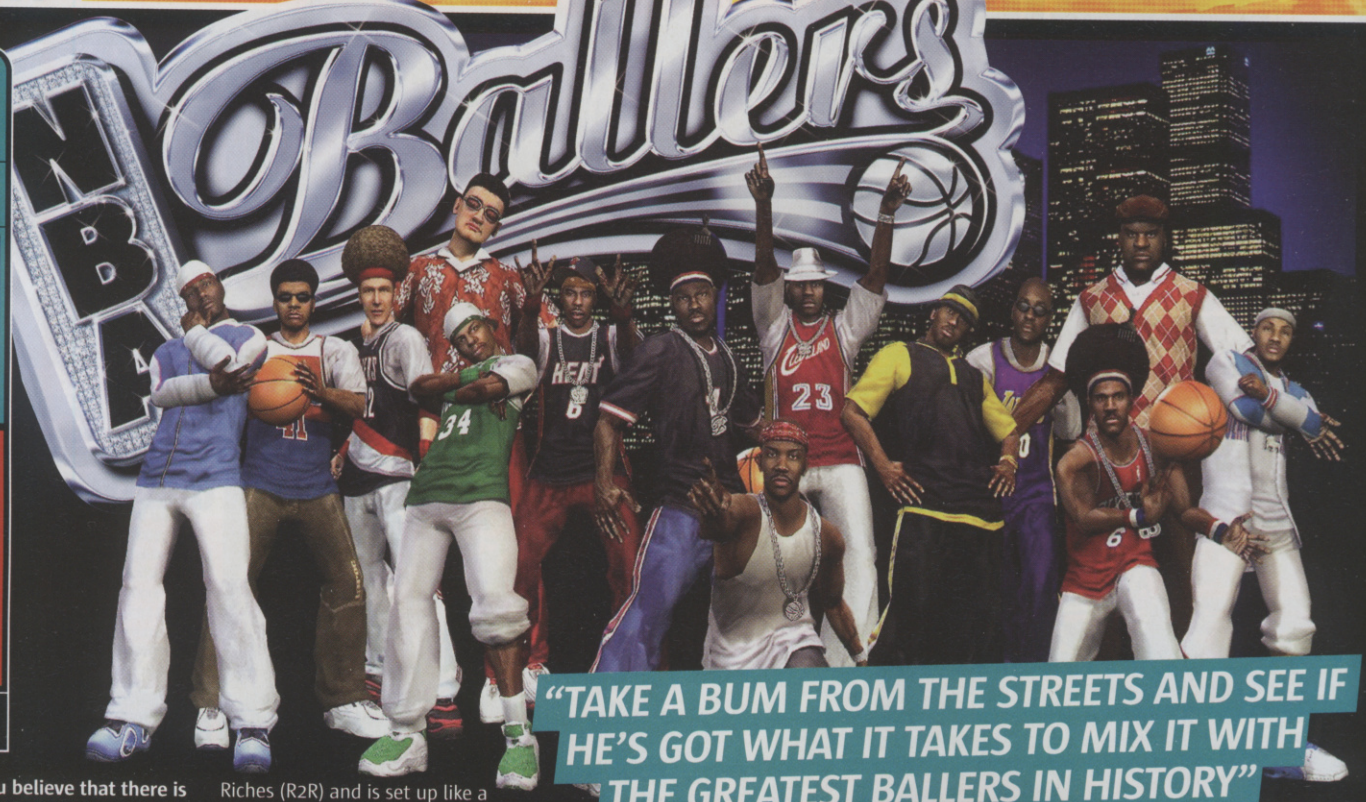
AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX

WWW.NBABALLERS.COM



"TAKE A BUM FROM THE STREETS AND SEE IF HE'S GOT WHAT IT TAKES TO MIX IT WITH THE GREATEST BALLERS IN HISTORY"

If you believe that there is an 'I' in 'team', and that something done properly is only ever done on a DIY basis, NBA Ballers is your new best friend. Stateside, where it matters most, folks have really taken to this bling-bling Basketball sensation, and it's muscled in on NBA Street's territory.

The US has gone crazy for Ballers because it stands apart from Street in a couple of huge respects. Though it is similar to EA's hoops-in-da-hood series, Ballers is a strictly one-on-one competition in which the rewards are riches to furnish the ultimate crib of your dreams.

BALLING ON REALITY TV

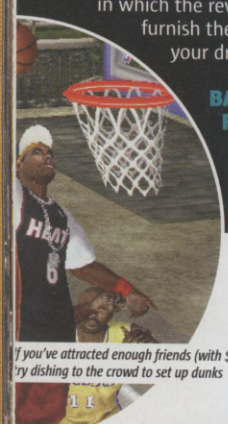
The main event for NBA Ballers is called Rags to Riches (R2R) and is set up like a twisted reality TV show... how many times have you heard that one, right? But trust us on this, R2R is cool.

The show is dreamed up to take a bum from the streets and see if he's got what it takes to mix it with the greatest ballers in the history of the NBA. Of course this bum off the streets is you. Before hitting the court, you must create your in-game persona using a detailed succession of menus, with a lot of freedom to create face-types right down to tattoos, and even which way up or around you wear a visor. Nobody else will be a freak like you once you're finished, that's guaranteed.

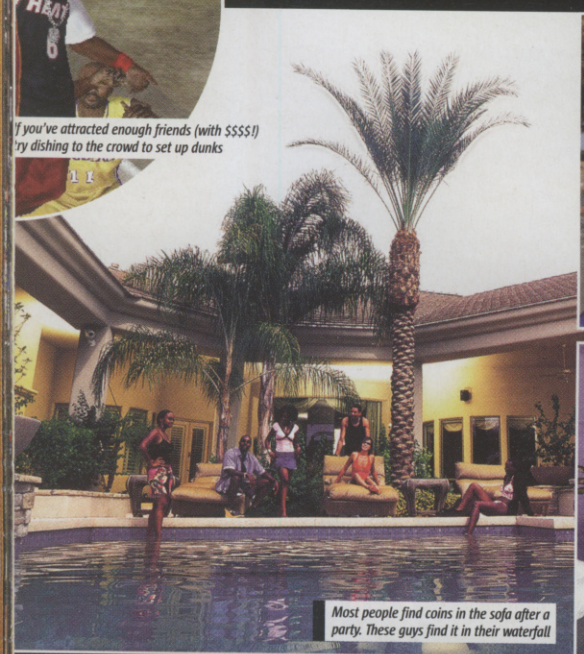
MAKE IT ALL COUNT

Like we mentioned earlier, Ballers is mostly a strict one-on-one game, whereas in NBA Street it was three-on-three. Since only two of you the play area is only a half court. Nowhere to run, nowhere to hide and

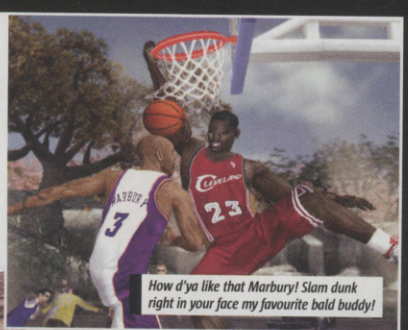
Slam a mad enough dunk and the backboard will explode in a rain of plastic shards



If you've attracted enough friends (with $$$$!) try dishing to the crowd to set up dunks



Most people find coins in the sofa after a party. These guys find it in their waterfall



How d'ya like that Marbury! Slam dunk right in your face my favourite bald buddy!

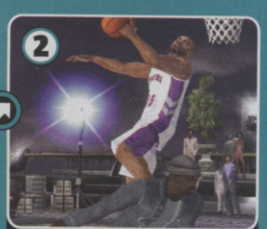
Maybe if you play really well a UFO comes down and you get to play on Mars! Only maybe

HANDS OFF MY HIZZLE!

You're gonna love the moves available in this game, almost every one of them designed to intimidate and infuriate your opponent.

The daddy of them all is a little beauty known as the Bring Down The House. This savage, psycotic slam-dunk ends up shattering the backboard into a pile of plastic dust, but there are more subtle ways of bringing tears to the eyes of onlookers.

Back 'Em Down allows you to inch closer to the net, while forcing them to foul

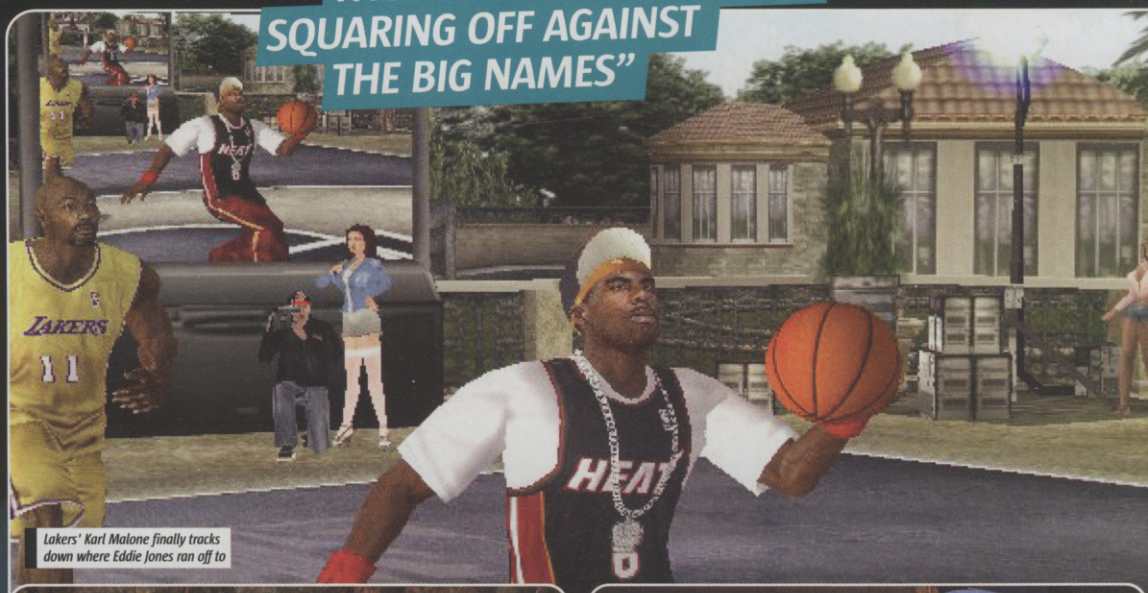


A Fade Away is a low skill move, but is an easy way to fake your intention to slam it

With your opponent backing down, spin away from them and make them look a fool

Phewee! This sweet slam dunk brought Anthony closer to Bringing Down The House!

"YOU'LL HAVE TO REALLY WORK THOSE ALLEY-OOPS BEFORE SQUARING OFF AGAINST THE BIG NAMES"



Lakers' Karl Malone finally tracks down where Eddie Jones ran off to

Reserve your juice for Slam Dunks from out of town to get the party started

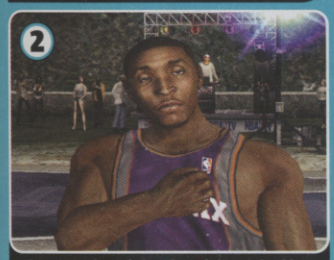
Realism goes right down to the tattoos worn by the real-life NBA Ballers, and the scowls!

SAY, AREN'T YOU...?

Ballers is so in-your-face that you get to stare at the other guy up close for a while as you psyche each other out before a tournament.

The detail is incredible: every crease, every freckle and all the scars on their faces. We also like how the physiques are reproduced accurately. Shaq is every inch the colossus you'd expect.

The Knicks' Allan Houston, feeling his way around the court – shades must be too dark


Shawn Marion of the Phoenix Suns, looking like he hasn't quite woken up yet

Colour coordination is obviously very important to Seattle Sonics' Rashard Lewis

LA Clippers' Elton Brand showing the right way to wear your cap the wrong way

whether you win or lose is all down to you... although with a little help from some friends which we'll explain later.

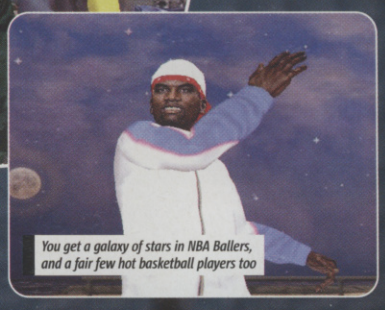
Your guy starts out with all the basic tools he needs to outsmart a succession of no-names, but you'll need to really work those Ally-oop and Playground attacking techniques (alongside those defensive Blocks and Steals) before squaring off against the big names from NBA history. Unlike NBA Street where development points can be spent on attributes, the only way to get better in Ballers is to make use of the moves that best suit your game.

There really is a huge range at your disposal too, so no two Ballers will develop the same way, and there are some moves that are only unlocked under certain conditions. You might get frustrated at first when those three-pointers refuse to go in, or you start feeling every ankle breaker that comes your way, but eventually the rewards are richer. So hang in there.

Perhaps the woolly hat helps Rashard Lewis concentrate better. Well, it might

THAT'S MINE, I OWN IT

Where Ballers gets smart is in the outward signs of your success. All games are played as a guest at some other guy's crib. You'll be strutting your stuff on Scottie Pippen's boat, and Karl Malone's winter chalet, with the dream of one day having these guys drop by your place and be amazed at what you've built for yourself. Money can indeed buy you everything, from friends who'll assist by setting up Alley-oops when you Pass to the Sideline, to more materialistic items that of course include jewellery, but also amazing sets of wheels to park in the background to prove how much you're worth. A screaming home crowd and gorgeous alloys would suggest you're probably pretty good. Build yourself the ultimate crib, and have people over to make them green with envy.


You get a galaxy of stars in NBA Ballers, and a fair few hot basketball players too

THE MAGIC NUMBER

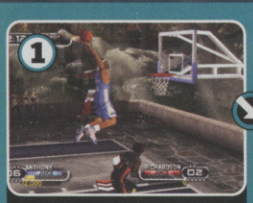
Unless you're a cola-bottle-fuelled crazy who just doesn't know when to stop, you'll appreciate the more friendly competition in the other game modes. Chief among them is One vs One vs One. Yep, that's three of you on the half-court at once. It's a laugh real with three of you scrapping for the same ball, and a good workout even if the other players are CPU controlled.

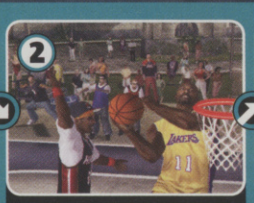
The TV Tournament is the place to be if you're set on unlocking famous NBA players to play as, so in addition to the starting line-up that includes Stephon Marbury, Darko Milicic and Jermaine O'Neal, you'll eventually have the likes of Shaq, Kobe Bryant and the great Kareem Abdul Jabaar to call 'friend'. ✷

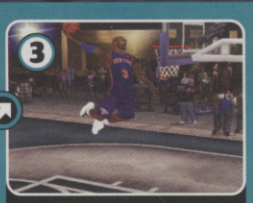
BAD ATTITUDE

NBA Jam started all this madness, many moons ago. The whole thing with the players being On Fire, the Slam Dunks from a mile away (and a mile high)... wicked!

So you've got to know that the craziest stunts are waiting for you to discover in Ballers, fuelled by a nasty little Juice meter, powered by any combination of the L and R buttons.


Juice-fuelled slam dunks give you air and speed, but can't guarantee the end product


Your defensive moves can be juiced up, enabling blocks that would otherwise be tough

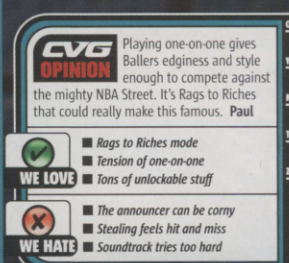

Yes sir, that's the Stephon Marbury that we like to love! Hope you got this on camera!

CVG OPINION

Playing one-on-one gives Ballers edginess and style enough to compete against the mighty NBA Street. It's Rags to Riches that could really make this famous. **Paul**

WE LOVE
- Rags to Riches mode
- Tension of one-on-one
- Tons of unlockable stuff

WE HATE
- The announcer can be corny
- Stealing feels hit and miss
- Soundtrack tries too hard



* PUBLISHER CODEMASTERS
* DEVELOPER CODEMASTERS
* OUT: SEPTEMBER

ONLINE GAMING x8

IN A NUTSHELL

The Scottish king of rally returns with over 30 cars, nine international locations with eight stages each, a new career challenge and 300-plus events, a nifty new 'collision daze' effect and great damage modelling!

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

XBOX, PC

WWW.CODEMASTERS.CO.UK/COLINMCRAE2005/

COLIN McCRASH

The McRae series has always been the daddy of chassis-shattering crashes, but we couldn't resist showing you McRae 2005's additions to the damage model.

The wicked new daze effect makes big collisions feel even more skull-cracking than before – hit something hard and your vision blurs. The car damage looks cool too, and is a brilliantly balanced way to punish your bugger-ups.

Dazed and confused? Hit a tree and the the cool vision blur will make your head spin

The stages are bumpier so high-speed bobbles can send you flying through the air

The damage model rules. Check out the exposed engine and shattered windows

Damage knackers your performance so you'll have to make repairs between stages

Even if you're bombing it through the gravel you can still appreciate the silky visuals

You can drive further off the track than before, but go too far and you'll be shazamed back on course

Your wheels aquaplane when you hit fjords and streams – make sure you're heading in the right direction or see that wall on your right? It'll hurt

COLIN MCRAE 2005

We reckon these licensed rally games are cursed. First Richard Burns has to withdraw from the WRC because of a brain tumour, and now Colin McRae doesn't even have a team for the upcoming season.

Maybe that's why big Col seems to be taking less of a role. McRae 04 lets you create your own rally driver, and 2005's big new addition is a huge Career Mode that starts you off puttering through ditches in weedy two-wheel drives and ends with you fighting for the World Championship in 400 brake horsepower beasts.

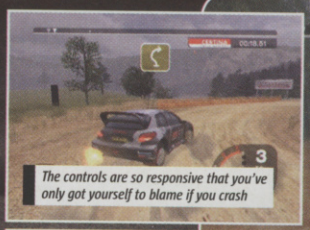
No rally game would be complete without spine-shattering jumps, and McRae doesn't disappoint

The car models definitely look wider, harder and meaner than Richard Burns Rally's motors

DRIVE ME MCRAE-ZY

There are over 30 cars to unlock and collect, including all the usual suspects like Soobs and Mitsus to new faces like wee Minis and Volkswagen Beetles. You'll even be able to plough through pedestrians with brutally powerful (and banned) Group B motors.

Every component can be tweaked and tuned through a range of cool menus, but if you can't be arsed you can just jump into the driver's seat and floor it without being punished.



The controls are so responsive that you've only got yourself to blame if you crash

Richard Burns scared you off powerslides. In McRae they're a God-given right

Rally's all about you and your motor against nature

Choosing the right tyres really slices back your times – keep an eye on the conditions

After being thrashed by Richard Burns Rally's hardcore rally whiplash, McRae 2005 is a refreshing change. The handling system's always balanced arcade slip-slideyness with simulation responsiveness, and McRae 2005 is yet another refinement.

You always feel in control, always ready to adjust as your tyres lose their bite on the gravel and the bonnet tries to hump a tree, but equally aware that any muck-up will face-plant you into an oak or send you spinning down a cliff face.

The only real problem is rally itself. Head-to-head special stages break up the lonely time trials, but most events remain a procession of solitary blasts down deserted roads.

BURNING COL

McRae 2005's going down RalliSport 2's multiplayer road by adding in eight-player online modes on both PS2 and Xbox. Don't expect RalliSport's bumper-mashing showdowns – your opponents will be 'ghosted out – but it should add a huge competitive element to the grit-churning.

Yeah, it's a tune-up rather than a whole new model, but there's enough fuel here to keep fans' engines roaring. There might be a curse on Colin, but McRae 2005 feels like it's going to be rally black magic. *

Check the huge vistas! No more McRae tunnel vision

CVG OPINION

Makes you feel like a handbrake-turning guru even when you're picking your teeth out a tree. Just a tune-up, but dammit, McRae does rally better than anyone. **Graeme**

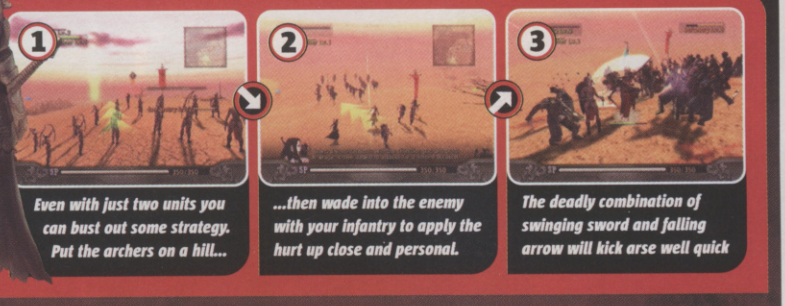
WE LOVE
- Fast, wide-open stages
- Handling model feels right
- Online mode should be good

WE HATE
- Needs a new trick
- Some stages feel a bit empty
- No short, sharp events

PLANNED CARNAGE

We've only been able to play early levels and command a few troops at a time, but already we've enjoyed putting some smart-arse strategy into action.

You'll need to use the terrain, the weather, and even the position of the sun to your full advantage.



1. *Even with just two units you can bust out some strategy. Put the archers on a hill...*
2. *...then wade into the enemy with your infantry to apply the hurt up close and personal.*
3. *The deadly combination of swinging sword and falling arrow will kick arse well quick*

- PUBLISHER MICROSOFT
- DEVELOPER PHANTAGRAM
- OUT: NOVEMBER
- ONLINE GAMING
- x4

IN A NUTSHELL

Brutal hack 'n' slash action stuffed kicking and screaming into a crispy coated real-time strategy shell. Four playable characters, over 50 missions on 60 maps, 30 different troop types and some class Xbox Live modes.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

WWW.PHANTAGRAM.COM /CRUSADERS.ASP

Blood spurts, bodies fly, blades swing - KUF's melee battles are fully intense

When you're wading into raging battles it really feels like the shite's about to hit the fan

Call your Lieutenants in any time to help you out with special moves

KINGDOM UNDER FIRE: THE CRUSADERS

What's action without strategy? Football without Sven-style tactics would be a bunch of mentalists battering the ball around, and pulling stunning birds without meticulously planning your seduction would be... well, pretty good actually.

Bad example. In most cases, a bit of action is much better when you've planned out the domination of your opponent. Case in point? KUF: The Crusaders. Xbox-only sequel to the popular PC version, Crusaders is all about planning your attack – then cracking some skulls.

Set amidst the bible-bashing, head-smashing of a mythical holy war, you choose one of four playable characters and lead them onto the battlefield, seen from a third-person view. You can order your troops to march to a location, change their formation or set them loose on enemies. Start a ruck and you take direct control over your rampaging General.

F-ORC'S SAKE

It feels instant, frantic, and brilliantly violent as you wade through packs of orcs, elves and infantrymen. Like Dynasty Warriors or LOTR, quick, combo-based mash-ups overload your eyeballs with sword-swipes and blood spurts. Tasty.

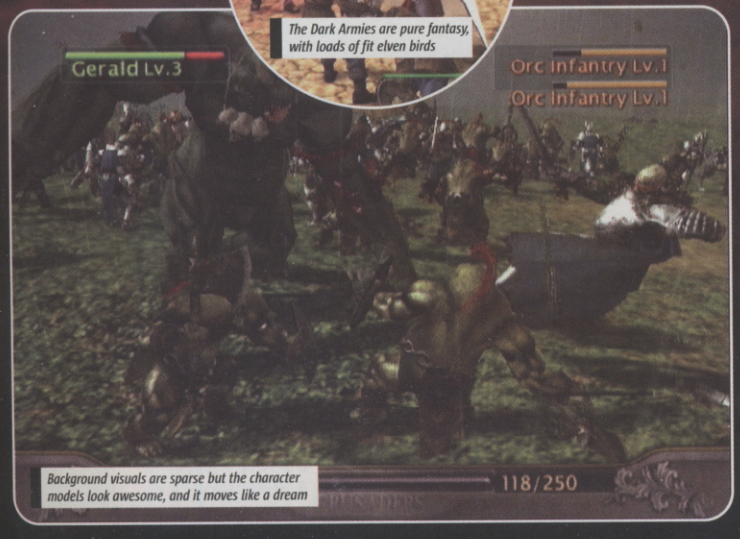
The Dark Armies are pure fantasy, with loads of fit elven birds

Lucretia's twin swords have some crazy visual effects that make the air itself go all watery

But it's not all hack 'n' slash. As the game progresses you'll command up to ten different platoons from 15 upgradable unit types. It's up to you to choose precisely the right ones for each mission and develop their skills throughout.

By pressing the shoulder buttons you can cycle through your units and give them individual orders. Exploit tactical advantages and you'll clear up the field quicker and easier.

The strategy and action come together surprisingly well, and Xbox Live deathmatch modes could really have us worshipping at KUF: The Crusaders' altar. Our strategy is to review this real soon. ✷



Background visuals are sparse but the character models look awesome, and it moves like a dream

CVG OPINION

Button-mashing melee combat backed by complex and enjoyable strategy elements. With some great online modes confirmed, Kingdom could rule. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Quick, skull-cracking melee combat
- Simple yet deep strategy
- Online Deathmatch play will rock

WE HATE
- Landscapes look quite plain
- Close combat could lack depth
- Orcs and elves, frankly, are crap

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

U MOVE SUPER SPORTS

- PUBLISHER KONAMI
- DEVELOPER KONAMI
- OUT: SEPTEMBER
- PS2
- x4
- WWW.UK.KONAMI-EUROPE.COM

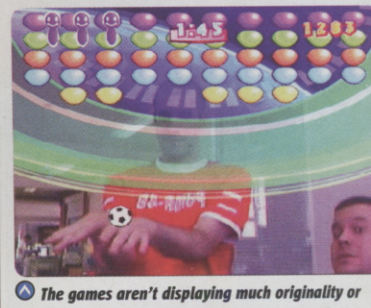
It is an indisputable scientific fact that it's impossible to play any EyeToy game without looking like a complete and utter tool, but U Move Super Sports is all about, um, sports, so we were hoping that we wouldn't look TOO daft playing it.

Wrong. U Move chucks fifteen sporty mini-games at you ('simulations' of golf, rugby, horseracing, curling, baseball and ten variations on a footie theme), but you still look like nob.

It's standard EyeToy stuff. You'll be hitting balls in the footie games, protecting your drive from birds and leaves in the golf game, tackling rugger-playing bulls in the rugby game, and launching homers out of the park in the baseball game. At the end of the day it's just waving your hands and – aside from eleven dull-looking bonus games – U Move doesn't look like it's trying to offer anything new.

The kiddie visuals aren't doing it for us either, plus we're disappointed there's no tie-in with Konami's real sporting franchises. But worst of all, there's no 'Batter the Swiss Referee' game. ✷

Make like Portugal's keeper and save the ball with no gloves on. CVG Scot Grazza seems suspiciously happ



The games aren't displaying much originality or depth at the moment. Anyone for some Smarties?

The other sports, like rugby, are a bit more interesting but still looking too simplistic

WE LOVE
- Laughing at Grazza looking like a total nob. Again
- Waving our arms about like tubes

WE HATE
- The games are a bit dull
- And there's only 15 of them
- An EyeToy Pro Evo would've ruled

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

RED NINJA
END OF HONOR

- PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
- DEVELOPER: TRANJI
- OUT: OCTOBER
- PS2
- XBOX
- WWW.REDNINJAGAME.COM

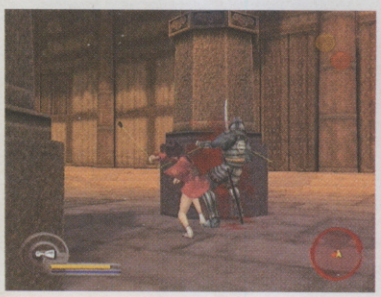
Word of advice: if a sexy babe dressed in a red ninja suit gives you the come on, approach with caution. Unless you want a big rusty knife plunged into your forehead, that is. A great way to a man's brain, yes, but not his heart...

While ninja games are being done to death at the moment, Red Ninja's twist is its heroine's wicked fighting style. Armed with a long wire, this sultry assassin can hang foes from posts, garrotte throats and slice off heads, torsos and feet by using a special blade attachment. Even more cunning is the 'seduction' technique, where she lures pervy baddies to their death with a simple ass wiggle. Not enough for you? She can run up walls too.

The version we played was still rough round the edges – iffy camera and fiddly controls. Still, we spied enough potential in the feisty fighting moves alone to reckon this stealthy action fest should be worth a cheeky peek. ✷

Hang around with all your samurai buddies. 'Hang around'. Geddit? Ho ho...

Red can seduce lone guards before stabbing them as they move in for a snog. The little vixen!



Bondage alert! Tie the samurai up before beating the stink out of them. They love it, the dirty bitches

WE LOVE
- Super-gory fighting moves
- Butt jigglin'
- You can run along walls

WE HATE
- Gameplay is slightly unoriginal
- Camera and visuals still need a bit of tinkering

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

MEN OF VALOR

- PUBLISHER: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL
- DEVELOPER: 2015
- OUT: OCTOBER
- ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

Story-led, first-person shooter set during the Vietnam conflict developed by the Medal Of Honor: Allied Assault peeps. Expect lots of jungle mayhem and carnage, plus it features online options for up to 16 players.

AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PC

WWW.2015.COM

Happens all the time - out shooting birds and suddenly ambushed by the NVA. Tsk...

This boat scene is one of the tensest shooting levels we've seen in ages

This level looks just like the end part of mental 'Nam flick Full Metal Jacket

Following the likes of ShellShock: Nam '67 and Vietcong, Men Of Valor: Vietnam is the latest first-person blast 'em up to trawl the muddy jungles of '60s 'Nam.

You play Dean Shepard, a US military operative who narrates the unfolding drama through a series of letters. But this ain't no poncy pen-pal adventure. It's nut-shrivellingly tense guerrilla warfare, chucking you into a mad variety of sinister soldiering scenarios.

JUNGLE F-F-FEVER

One moment you're creeping through dense jungle, the next your butt's being roasted in a rundown city. You'll get ambushed in your own base camp, hover over hostile villages in choppers and blast down bridges during night-time boat patrols. Soul-piercing screams, sneaky assed booby traps and frightened, fleeing soldiers make this scarier than catching a glimpse of your granny in the nuddy.

But this isn't a sightseeing mission. Men Of Valor's meaner than a grizzly bear with a bee up its butt. For the most part, the NVA (North Vietnamese Army) are so well camouflaged that it's mega-hard to know exactly where to shoot, plopping an extra-fat scoop of tension into the mix.

If you're still hungry for Vietnam bang-bang, Men Of Valor will be starting its tour of duty this October. Check out CVG's definitive review coming real soon. ✷

The awesome helicopter level: destroy this NVA base before it annihilates you

CVG OPINION

MOV is already a well-trained recruit, with atmosphere as thick as its jungley undergrowth. Promises to outgun ShellShock and rip Vietcong a new bunghole. **Stephen**

WE LOVE
- Brilliantly atmospheric visuals
- References all the 'Nam films
- Blasting bases from choppers

WE HATE
- Getting shot to itty-bitty pieces
- NVA almost impossible to see

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

* PUBLISHER
UBISOFT
* DEVELOPER
GEAR BOX
* OUT:
OCTOBER

ONLINE GAMING | x16

IN A NUTSHELL

Lead a squad of US paratroopers in Normandy in this tactical FPS. Use cover and flanking manoeuvres to outwit your smart-thinking Nazi enemies. It's Medal Of Honor meets Full Spectrum Warrior.

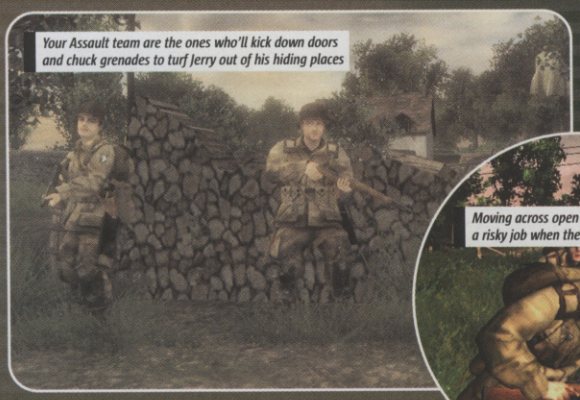
AVAILABLE ON

XBOX

ALSO ON

PS2, PC

WWW.BROTHERSINARMS GAME.COM



Your Assault team are the ones who'll kick down doors and chuck grenades to turf Jerry out of his hiding places

Moving across open ground will always be a risky job when there are snipers around

Friendly and enemy tanks will come into play. Better hope it's more friendly than enemy

Loads of stuff that actually happened in Normandy goes on in Brothers In Arms

BROTHERS IN ARMS™

We may be used to leading squads of elite SWAT troops against Albanian terrorists, or commanding crack teams of US special forces in the mountains of Afghanistan, but when was the last time you gave out orders to a platoon of WWII grunts?

Before long you can do just that when you jump into the combat fatigues of Sergeant Matt Baker, a member of the US 101 'Screaming Eagles' airborne division.

The game follows Baker and his unit's first eight days of the D-Day campaign, beginning with you getting dumped out of a transport plane over Normandy in pitch darkness. Provided the red hot tracer doesn't get you on the way down, once groundside you'll find yourself isolated from your comrades, lost, and unarmed. From here, your job is to link up with your men, and do your bit to thwart Mr Hitler and his cronies.

Essentially a team-based FPS, Brothers In Arms' orders system is simple enough, and you don't have to give commands to individuals as the men are organised in small squads – typically a fire team with a machine gun, and an assault squad with plenty of grenades. In the heat of battle you'll be glad to see your men are programmed to act like veterans, taking cover from enemy fire and choosing targets wisely.

There's an amazing re-run of the Band Of Brothers-style air drop over Normandy on D-Day

Use your weapon's sights for extra accuracy – wait till you see the whites of their eyes

All of which is good news considering the enemy's no dimwit. In fact, you'll have to use your tactical nous as much as your trigger finger to get the better of your well-trained, square-headed adversary.

Suppressing fire is going to be crucial to this, as enemy soldiers will all look after number one, ducking away from incoming rounds. You can even turn on icons displayed above all enemies' heads showing their current state of suppression – meaning you can time your run across that open road to perfection. Also cool is the way you can stop the action at any time and zoom out for a bird's-eye view of the action, which is awesome for getting your bearings and working out your next move.

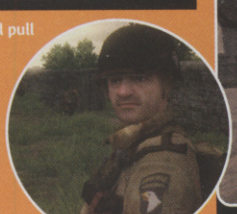
When the smoke clears, you have to say that BIA looks damn cool, and has some killer tactical features. This is one well worth keeping your eyes on, and don't be surprised if it hits the WWII FPS battlefield like a B-52 strike. ✷

The character models are awesome – some of the best we've seen in a console FPS

As you wander around between fights, you'll come across the debris of war all over the place

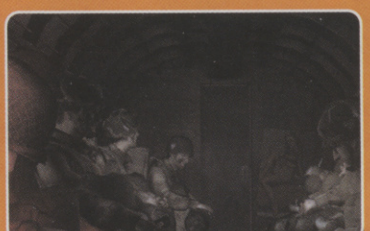
VIRTUAL MUSEUM

One of the things that'll pull your pin is the way they've modelled the people and places involved in the game on the events that actually took place in Normandy 1944.



All the US officers above the rank of Lieutenant are based on real commanders from the battles, and the locations are based on aerial photographs and visits to the actual locations by the developers.

Every location in the game is based on a real place in Normandy. An ex-US Army officer made sure it all looks realistic

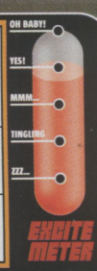


They've even gone to the insane length of making sure the insignia on the soldiers' helmets and tunics are accurate

CVG OPINION Brothers has got a great mix of gritty, mud-stained WWII action and realistic tactical options. It looks fierce when the lead flies, and we're expecting big things. **Steve O**

WE LOVE
- Using proper tactics in an FPS
- Awesome bird's-eye strategic view
- Frantic Fritz-bashing firefights

WE HATE
- No British troops... Again!
- Does every WWII game have to be in Normandy?



The character design remains one of the most impressive aspects of the game

- PUBLISHER: ATARI
- DEVELOPER: BANDAI
- OUT: TBA

ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

The third instalment in the colossal synthesised online RPG saga adds the elements of isolation and detachment to the storyline. Intrigue deepens, but gameplay and characters remain the same.

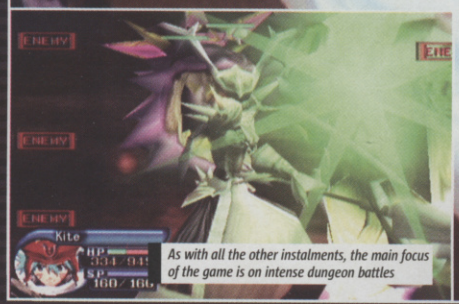
AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.DOTHACK.COM

The evil CC Corporation are now blaming the corruption in The World on innocent hackers

With all the formidable Level 70 monsters you'll be facing this time, better invest in a vat of healing potion

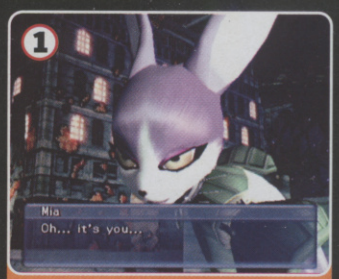


As with all the other instalments, the main focus of the game is on intense dungeon battles

DARKNESS FALLS

Each of the instalments in the .hack saga has had a very distinctive feel, even though the bulk of the gameplay has been very similar.

For Outbreak, the mood is dark, less optimistic than the others. From the very beginning, Kite is isolated, and even his dearest friends have turned their backs...



Yikes! - Mia has turned from a pleasant character into an angry bunny-boiler!

At the start of the game, even BlackRose turns against poor Kite. Must be the hat

DOT HACK OUTBREAK

The title says it all. In the spread of any deadly disease, the pattern is the same. First comes Infection, then comes Mutation, then, most serious of all, the Outbreak, where the disease travels beyond the original host and seeks new flesh to corrupt.

The third instalment in the simulated online RPG saga faithfully follows the rules of infection, as the corruption that has wrought havoc across the fictional online community known as The World jumps across to the real 'world' and starts to have serious repercussions offline. Understandably, the themes and storyline reflect a more sinister tone.

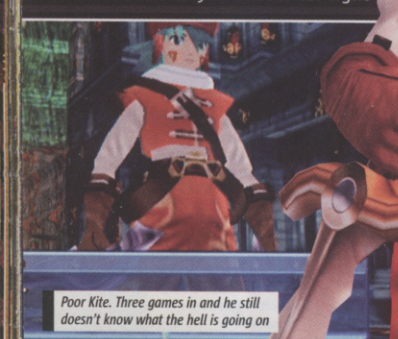
THE WORLD IS NOT ENOUGH

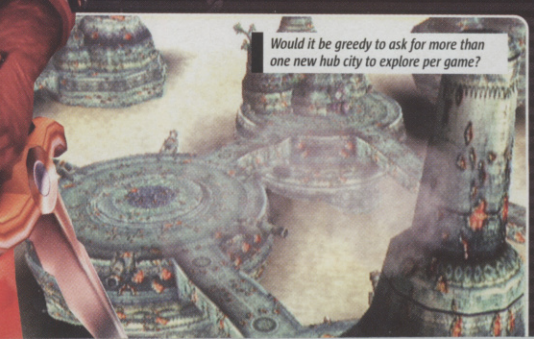
If you're new to the .hack universe then Outbreak will leave you baffled. This far into the madness, it can only be for the true die-hards who have followed the twists and turns of the epic online RPG simulator. There's a brief explanation of the plot at the beginning of the game, b the monsters that you encounter right from the start are now at such a high level that any novice .hacker will be ripped to shreds within seconds.

Expect to meet the sort of mouthy gits you'd meet in a genuine online RPG

As with the other games, you get to explore just one new hub town, namely Aeriel City, Fort Ouph. Very pretty it is too. Here you can buy your potions and interact with your pretend online buddies – those that will talk to you, that is.

The one other major innovation is the Grunty Search, where your hand-reared Grunties can be used to seek out hidden portals and treasure chests. In other words, the synthetic .hack World turns as usual, but casts a much darker shadow. ✷


Poor Kite. Three games in and he still doesn't know what the hell is going on

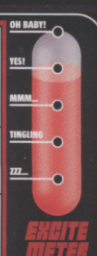

Would it be greedy to ask for more than one new hub city to explore per game?

CVG OPINION

The series is well established by now, and this is more of the same polished material. The story gets better, but the endless dungeons are starting to grate. **Maura**

WE LOVE
- Ever deeper sinister plotline
- Class character animation
- The free anime DVD is exquisite

WE HATE
- Dungeons a little too repetitive
- Very few new characters compared to the first two instalments



TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2005

EA SPORTS™

Tiger himself's still the man to beat to unlock everything the game holds

* PUBLISHER EA
* DEVELOPER EA
* OUT: SEPTEMBER 24

ONLINE GAMING PS2, PC

x4

IN A NUTSHELL

Get ready for stat meltdown: 14 courses, 20 players, 14 game modes including new Legend Pursuit mode and rock-hard Tour Mode Difficulty, and more customisation options than ever. No Xbox Live though! Aaargh!

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

ALSO ON

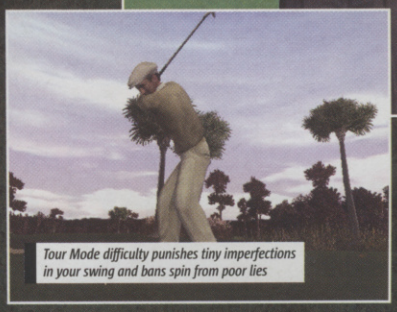
XBOX, GC, GBA

WWW.EASPORTS.COM

We feel sorry for the guys at EA's Redwood Studios. Imagine having to churn out a Tiger Woods game every year. Having to improve on a control method that's a fart's width from perfection, and having to add content where content's already stuffed.

So what do they do? Well, not much. If you were expecting innovations to the swinging stuff you're out of luck. In terms of golf gameplay Tiger Woods is already hitting the Grand Slam, so why mess with it?

That's not to say Tiger Woods doesn't contain ANYTHING new. The most important addition is a new game mode called Legend Pursuit. You go up against five legendary golfers (Arnold Palmer, Ben Hogan, Jack Nicklaus, Gary Player and Seve Ballesteros) and if you beat them you'll receive Legend coins. The ultimate goal is to tame the Tiger, but in the meantime you can spunk your Legend coins on courses.



Tour Mode difficulty punishes tiny imperfections in your swing and bans spin from poor lies

CUSTOM COURSES

Yup, courses. You can actually buy all 18 holes then customise every last blade of grass with a system called TigerProofing. Change the grass colour, stick massive logos all over the place – just make sure it pisses off all the staid old farts in the clubhouse.

Weather, time and upkeep affect courses. Keep an eye on the grass

You can also ramp up the difficulty by narrowing fairways and greens, sinking bunkers, and lengthening rough. Combined with the vicious new Tour Difficulty Mode and longer Tiger Tees, EA reckons TW 2005 will add 12 shots to the round of an expert player. Stick that up your handicap.

What else? Well, there's 11 new licensed courses, 17 all-new EA characters, 1500 new items in the Pro Shop, weather effects that genuinely influence the ball physics, and an improved Game Face feature.

It's even online on PS2 but – hold your breath Xbox owners – Live play is US only. The bloke at EA told us it's because they didn't have time to implement it in Europe, which sucks serious arse.

Ah well, there's always next year. The guys at EA Redwood will, once again, churn out another Tiger Woods game by not doing anything to the sublime swinging sweetness, but also adding in enough stuff to keep hardcore fans happy. Nice work, fellas. ✷

TIGERPROOFING

If Tiger's new Tour mode still isn't enough of a challenge for your swinging skills, TigerProofing will let you tailor just how double-tough you want courses to be.

You'll be able to fully customise unlocked courses with personal touches, then challenge online golfers to a round. Landscape gardening has never been so much fun.

Turn diddy sandpits into Sahara-style sandtraps and spend time on the beach!

Get rough on wayward drives by raising the grass length for ball-sucking snarl

Keep approach shots tough by shrinking greens and adding ridges

Some courses don't need to be made harder – stick your logo over 'em instead

Night golf is an atmospheric way to enjoy a round. We want to see neon balls, though

The changing weather conditions and time of day make TW 2005 the most atmospheric golf game yet

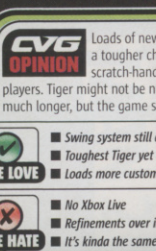
EA reckons the improved Game Face system lets you capture likenesses to 90-95 per cent accuracy

The Greek Islands is one of three fantasy courses. The others are Paradise Cove and the returning Emerald Dragon

CVG OPINION Loads of new additions and a tougher challenge for scratch-handicap TW players. Tiger might not be number one much longer, but the game still is. **Graeme**

WE LOVE
- Swing system still ace
- Toughest Tiger yet
- Loads more customisation

WE HATE
- No Xbox Live
- Refinements over innovation
- It's kinda the same game



DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: EMPIRES

✳ PUBLISHER
KOEI
✳ DEVELOPER
OMEGA FORCE
✳ OUT: 3 SEPTEMBER
PS2
WWW.KOEI.COM/LAUNCH/DW4E

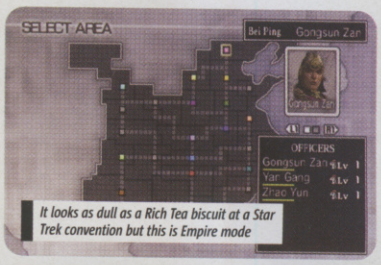
Fans will be thrilled that KOEI is set to pluck another limb-stacked slant on its Dynasty Warriors series from their hack 'n' slash hat. Building on the relentless mayhem of Dynasty Warriors 4, this latest version chucks Empire and Versus mode into the claret-drenched mix.

Empire mode is promising a heap of extra historical strategy by tossing you a map of Ancient China divided into 24 regions. You'll invade and conquer neighbouring territories by mercilessly thwacking it out on the battlefield until the whole country is under your control.

TACTICAL TANGO FOR TWO

Once you've done cackling maniacally, you can turn your attentions to Versus mode. Offering up Vanquish, Pilfer, Melee and Endurance challenges, pulverise your mate or the computer in a bid to pulp the most enemies, finger the most treasure, fight close-combat or stick it out the longest.

If your itchy trigger finger's been craving a return to KOEI's blazing battle antics then your weapon's already gonna be up in the air over this one, but it's likely to leave non-fans limp. ✳



WE LOVE
- Fast, frantic and bloodthirsty as ever
- Mashing mates in Versus is wicked
- 'Empire' lumps in a heap of strategy

WE HATE
- Repetitive button-mashing
- Still ain't much of a looker
- We'd prefer an all-new version

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

✳ PUBLISHER
KOEI
✳ DEVELOPER
KOEI
✳ OUT:
17 SEPTEMBER
ONLINE GAMING

IN A NUTSHELL

KOEI's frantic futuristic slash 'n' blast 'em up sequel relocates to PS2 for relentless limb-shredding, head-busting alien carnage. There's sci-fi intrigue and surprising depth between all the pad pounding.

AVAILABLE ON

PS2

WWW.KOEI.COM/LAUNCH/CRIMSONSEA2

CRIMSON SEA 2

Chances are you won't be too familiar with the original Crimson Sea, as it was set adrift with little ceremony on the Xbox last year. Despite a good critical reception for its combat-heavy gameplay, it made more of a plop than a splash in the charts, leading KOEI to wisely release this second instalment on the hack 'n' slash fans favourite PS2.

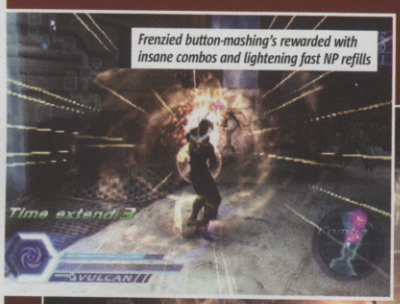
Playing as Sho, Golden Boy at the Intelligence Agency of the Galaxy, it's up to you to tackle sixty frenzied action-bent levels in a bid to defeat evil aliens known as The Menace. Apparently nobody's too keen on their habit of incubating then exploding from anyone in their immediate vicinity.

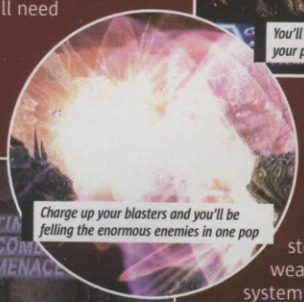
Perhaps the closest comparison to Crimson Seas is the offline mode in Sega's first two Phantasy Star Online episodes. You'll begin the game orbiting an infested planet aboard the space bound Command Center, which acts as a hub for all your adventures. Here, you'll buy and sell weapons and power-ups, meet your crew mates, train up your impressive combat skills and pick and choose your daredevil missions.

You'll be asked to perform tasks like locating artefacts, or clearing out insane waves of slathering enemies to progress through the surprisingly sophisticated storyline. While it's rarely anything complex, the sheer heart-pounding pace of the action means you'll barely get a breather long enough to notice.

BLAST OFF AND BASH

Combat is relatively simplistic and relies more on your epileptic trigger finger than cautious skill. Alongside his guns and melee attacks, Sho is a master of NeoPsionics. Essentially, these are sci-fi magic manoeuvres, whether offensive or defensive. Your NP gauge acts as your health and you'll need to fill it to perform a devastating, meter-depleting NP move. Luckily, mass slaughter and high combo counts bump it back up, so you'll stay well stocked given that monsters materialise in frightening droves.





The slick presentation, storyline and impressive weapons and abilities upgrade system look to add welcome depth to the frantic, if repetitive, button-mashing. But whether these will be enough to capture the imagination of anyone outside KOEI's existing slash-and-blast fanbase remains to be seen.✳

CVG OPINION

It's fast and frenzied but somewhat repetitive. Dynasty Warriors fans will love the familiar gameplay, as well as the refreshing sci-fi slant. **Matt W**

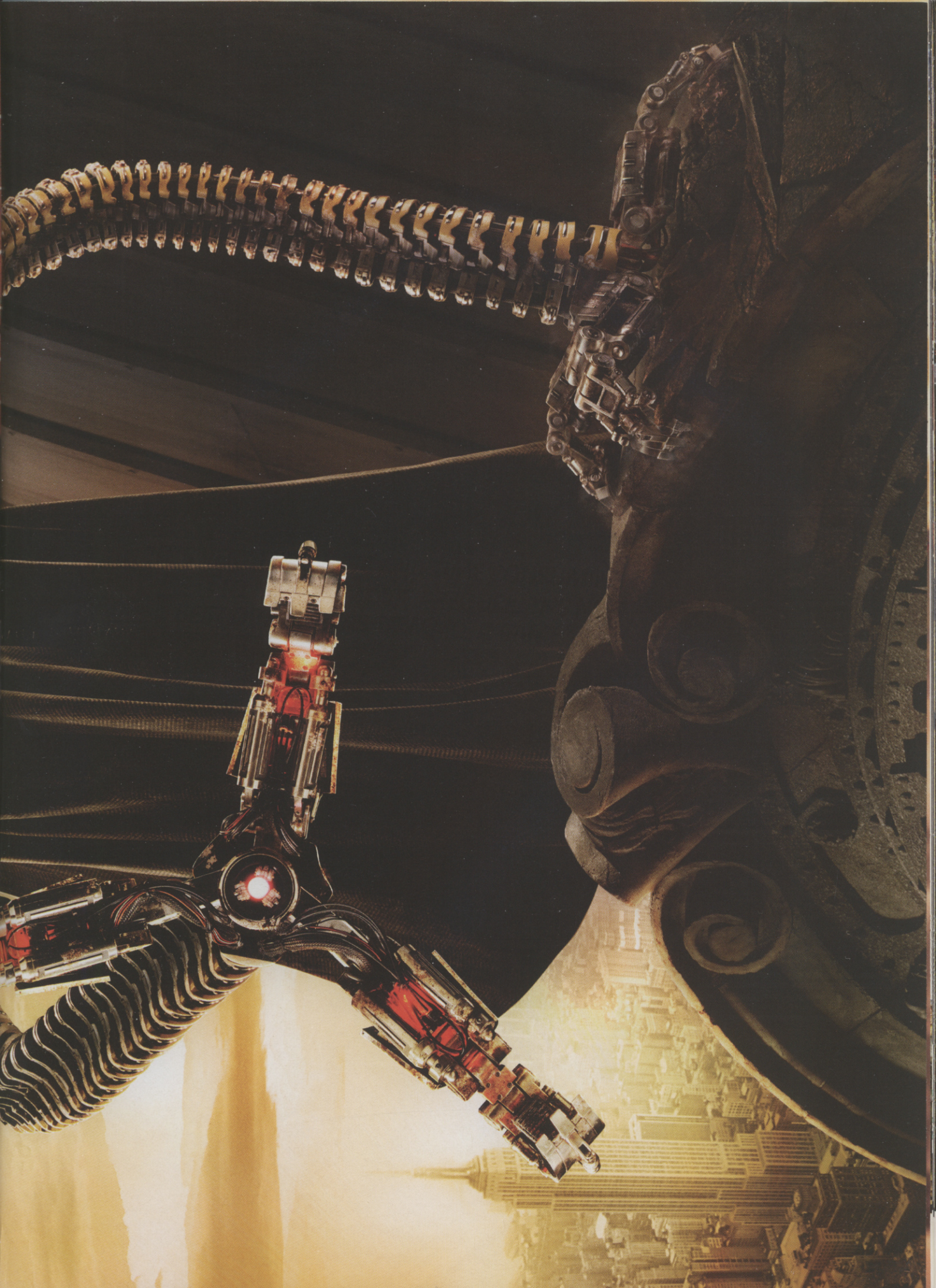
WE LOVE
- Insane alien carnage is relentless
- The story's a right good yarn
- NP attacks look wicked

WE HATE
- Button-bashing gets repetitive
- Environments are a bit drab
- Can get frustratingly tricky

EXCITE METER: OH BABY! / YES! / MMM... / TINGLING / ZZZ...

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG
SPIDER-MAN 2

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES
CVG
SPIDER-MAN 2



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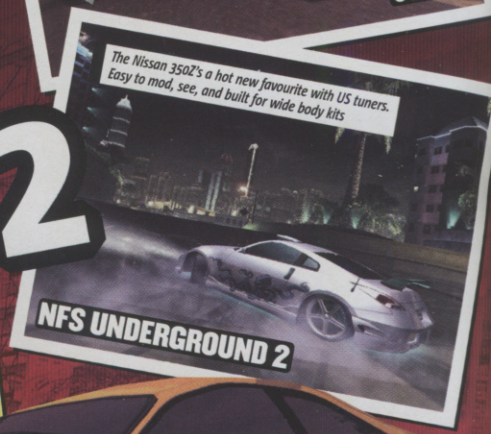
JUICED VS NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

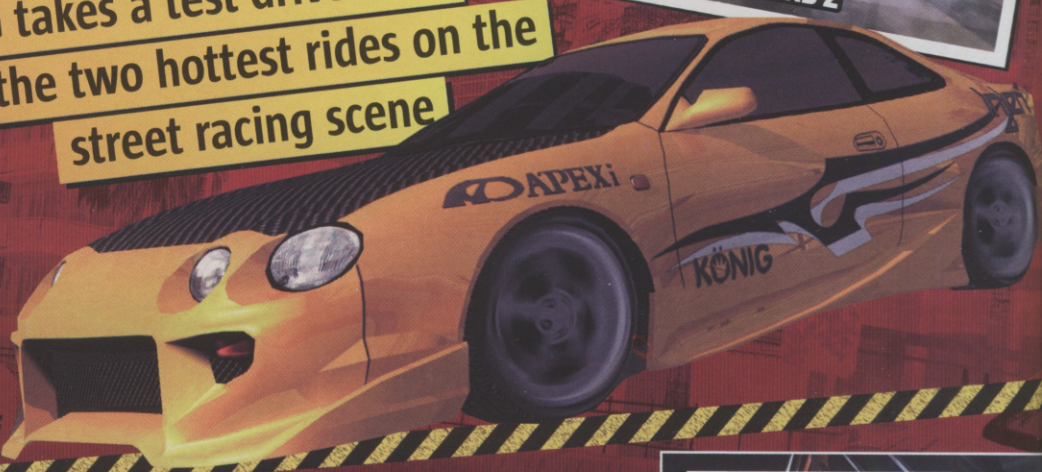


CVG takes a test drive with the two hottest rides on the street racing scene

Listen. Can you hear the bass throbbing from monstrous sub-woofers? Can you hear the wail of a race-tuned engine, the hiss of a gasping turbo, the metallic clunk of a perfectly slammed gearshift?

This time last year the street racing game existed only as a speck in the rear-view mirror. Then Need For Speed Underground brought us a racing game fuelled by adrenalin and powered by 16 valves of pure attitude.

Now everyone wants to take NFS down, smoke it off the blocks and snatch its street racing pink slip. Juiced is rolling up first for the fight. Does it pack enough horsepower to blaze past NFSU2, or will it blow its engine trying? Read on, and make up your own mind who rules the streets. Don't just listen – feel it. Welcome to custom car culture.



NEED FOR SPEED UNDERGROUND 2

FORMATS	RELEASE DATE	OFFLINE GAMING	ONLINE GAMING	CONTACT INFO
XBOX, PS2, GAMECUBE, PC CD ROM	NOVEMBER	1-4 PLAYERS	1-4 PLAYER RACES	PUB: EA DEV: EA CANADA WWW.NEEDFORSPEED.COM

It took 20 seconds for us to fall in love with the first NFS Underground. The neon-soaked street melted as we uncorked the nitrous, but there was a train – a huge, fibreglass-disintegrating cargo train – crossing the road up ahead. We twitched to the right, kissed a ramp and sailed over the obstacle with our exhaust spewing flames.

That was it. In those 20 seconds NFS Underground stuffed our eyeballs with the excitement-soaked coolness of street racing, doused it in petrol and chucked a match on it. Whoomph, we were hooked.

It's going to take even less time to love Underground 2. Three little words: free-roaming city. You're free to explore every street and alleyway of Bayview, a California-style city that sleeps during the day and wakes to the sound of race-tuned engines at night.

This place is enormous. Over 200 kilometres of driveable roads snake across five huge and distinct neighbourhoods. Slide up the hills to the leafy suburbs and you'll be greeted with a stunning view of the fizzing urban sprawl.

Car culture's about more than what happens during races, and Underground 2's going to let you live that life to the full. As you cruise around the city you'll run into fellow racers. Roll up alongside, flash your cash, and you'll challenge them to an Outrun Race. Put 300m of tarmac between yourself and their sorry ass and you've won.

IT'S GOT BIRDS TOO

You're clearly not reading this because she is so hypnotically hot, but her name's Brooke Burke and she's the in-game character that leads you through U2. Continue ogling.

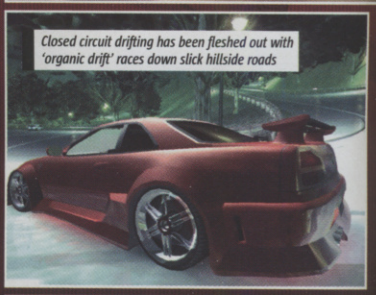
REP IT UP

It's a great way to make some quick greens, but there are greater rewards. Smoking chumps earns respect, and respect earns access to the best hook-up shops in the city. When you start Underground 2 you'll only know of a couple of spots. As your rep grows you'll know them all.

It's at these shops and garages you'll purchase your plain production motors, then trick them out with the hottest mods. Underground 2's upping the car count to 30 and rolling out loads of sweet new models including the Nissan 350Z and the Mazda RX-8. Even cooler, we've seen evidence of new car classes including massive 4x4 SUVs – looks like Underground 2 has trumped Midnight Club 3 by hooking up an Escalade.

The mod list has been filled out too, with all-new upgrades like big-ballin' scissor doors, deep roof scoops, and bass-pumping ICE setups joining the standard visual pimp-outs.

But it's not all about the visuals, and Underground 2's making sure you've got the horsepower to back up your style with a much more involving performance mod

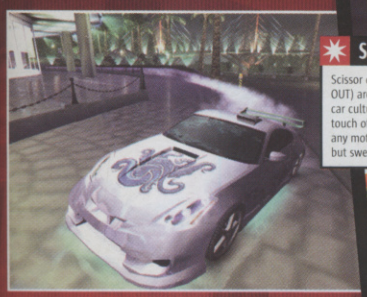


The night sky shifts from dusk till dawn and the clouds often piss rain on the streets

ICE, ICE, BABY

We're not sure about how EA can work In Car Entertainment (ICE) into the game but we can't wait to stick some fat subs and some trick tweeters into our rides. Boom!

Roof scoops, headlight lids, flip paint... U2 offers the coolest mods out there



Decals? Vinyls? You betcha arse, NFS Underground 2's got more than ever

section. This time round you'll be able to tweak and tune your upgrades to squeeze every last drop of torque out of your street beast.

HIGH-PERFORMANCE

Once you're fully pimped out and ready to roll you'll find the handling feels exactly like it did in the first game. We'd like to see the back ends of the motors made a little easier to flick out, but the sense of speed and constant on-the-edge driving makes up for it.

Ready to sniff out some competition? Keep an eye out for fellow tuners. Races in Underground 2 are triggered by creeping up on the right spot, but you'll need to juice your contacts for the info. Find a glowing area on the street, drive into it, and the race will start.

Underground's circuit, drag and drift races are joined by three all-new meets. We've played Outrun mode and Street X, an intense four-car blast through short, twisty tracks, but the other is still under wraps. Where's our money? We reckon some kind of Cruise mode, where you show off your motor's insane trick-outs and audio set-ups.

Looking fly is something Underground 2 takes seriously. It's got the visuals to blow away any competitor and exactly the right kind of street attitude to make you feel like the man every time you blaze through Bayview.

The addition of performance tweaking and the expansion of the customisation options is a change that'll please the boy racers, but it's still accessible for newbies to create their dream custom car and thrash it without getting oil on their hands. The competition better get back in the garage: Underground just got a tune-up. ✷

"EXACTLY THE RIGHT KIND OF STREET ATTITIDE TO MAKE YOU FEEL LIKE THE MAN"

SCISSOR SISTERS

Scissor doors (they open UP, not OUT) are the hottest thing in US car culture right now, giving a touch of Lambo-extravagance to any motor. Difficult to get out of but sweet as funk.

WIDE BOY

Super-wide bodykits transform the granny-car aesthetics of a production model into a stupid, brutal, angry street beast. Yes! Hate speed bumps but love giving you extra downforce.

SPOILERS OF VICTORY

In the original Underground spoilers, scoops and bonnets were purely cosmetic, but in U2 they all affect your motor's handling. Slap on a fancy spoiler and you'll feel the extra downforce as you corner!

BIG RIMMIN'

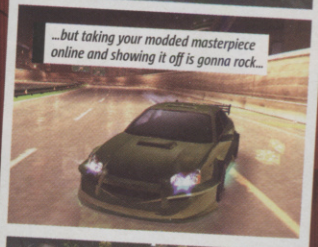
Gotta have the rims. Underground 2's going to fill out your wheel arches with stacks of new alloys. Massive 20-inch-plus rims and ultra-trick spinners will be included.

PHAT RIDES WORLDWIDE

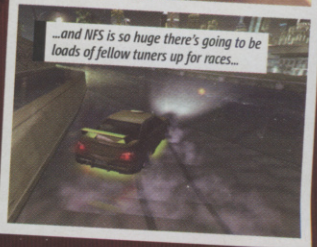
With EA and Microsoft Live best mates you'll be able to play Underground 2 online on PS2, Xbox and PC.

Hold up, though: a free-roaming city teeming with online players sounds awesome, but it's unlikely to happen. EA is suggesting that you'll be able to hit the city with three other online players, but quick in-and-out races are definitely confirmed.

We're not sure how much fun driving around the city will be in multiplayer...



...but taking your modded masterpiece online and showing it off is gonna rock...



...and NFS is so huge there's going to be loads of fellow tuners up for races...

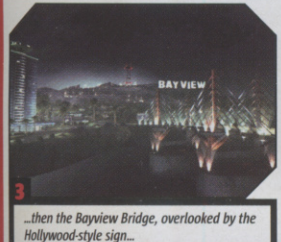
OWN THE STREETS

Welcome to Bayview, the world capital of custom car culture. And Underground 2's going to let you loose on every inch of tarmac in the city.

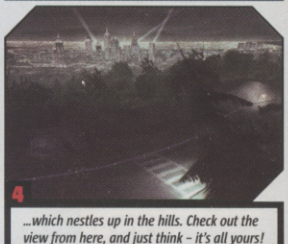
You'll discover the best shortcuts, shops and race meets. Go wherever you want to go – if you've got the rep – and take over the underground your way!

1 There are five areas to explore. Let's take a tour, starting in the rundown industrial zone...

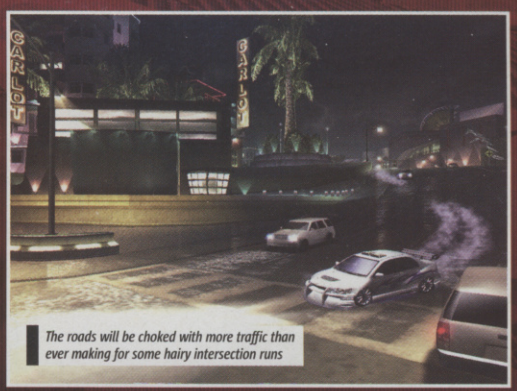
2 ...and moving onto the bright lights, big city atmosphere of the flashy downtown district...



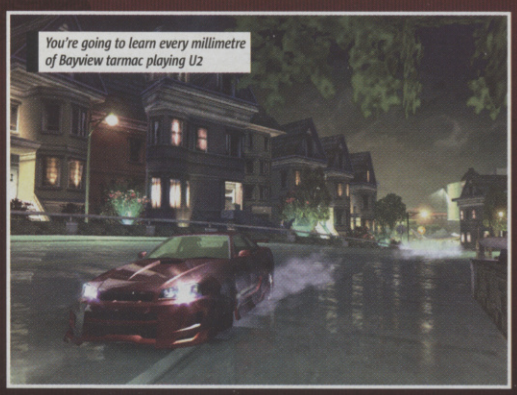
3 ...then the Bayview Bridge, overlooked by the Hollywood-style sign...



4 ...which nestles up in the hills. Check out the view from here, and just think – it's all yours!



The roads will be choked with more traffic than ever making for some hairy intersection runs



You're going to learn every millimetre of Bayview tarmac playing U2

FLOOR IT!

We've covered every inch of Underground 2's shiny midnight streets, so drop the hammer and screech over the page to test drive Juiced's mod-for-it motors!

JUICED

FORMATS	RELEASE DATE	OFFLINE GAMING	ONLINE GAMING	CONTACT INFO
XBOX, PS2, PC CD ROM	SEPTEMBER	1-4 PLAYERS	1-6 PLAYER/ TEAM RACES	PUB: ACCLAIM DEV: JUICE GAMES WWW.JUICEDTHEGAME.COM

Respect. Juice. That's what it's all about. You might have the sweetest motor in town, but if everyone thinks you're a tool then it doesn't mean a thing.

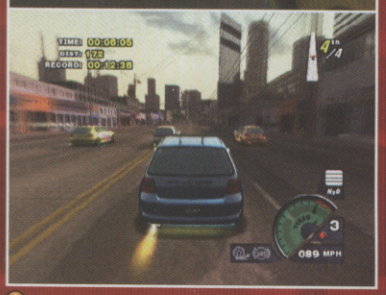
We've told you how respect opens garage doors all over Underground 2's Bayview city. Juiced takes it to the next level. Every move you make, every kerbed alloy and paint scratch, is watched by your friends and enemies. Muck up and you're out in the cold.

It starts with a second-hand motor. Get it into the garage, get the visuals up to street spec, then get under the bonnet and tune the crap out of her. Juiced's not pissing around with this stuff – the range of tweaks and customisations and the effect they have on your car's performance – it's staggering.

Example: don't just roll up, stuff your bargain basement motor with mods, and expect to be a shot caller. If you haven't balanced your tweaks your motor will flip your arse on the streets real quick. Luckily, you can test drive any mods you've made or stick the car on the rolling road.

It's not ridiculously hardcore, but it is essential that you pay attention to your car's performance. In Juiced you have to pay for any repairs to your car so it's an investment to ensure that it won't catapult you into someone's front garden.

Still, you'll probably end up spunking a fair wad of cash on touch-ups once you hit the tarmac. Don't just jam the accelerator: you'll stay totally still as your squealing rear tyres go into meltdown. Don't dab the brake through high-speed corners: you'll lock the wheels and spin out. And don't nudge your fellow racers unless you want to be picking up bits of your shredded fibreglass bodykit.



Managing your reserves of nitro is the key to distance races. Careful you don't get a leak...

REALITY CHECK

It's a hell of an education getting behind Juiced's steering wheel for the first time, but once you learn to respect the horsepower you're holding the reins to, it's a hugely satisfying experience. This is the Gran Turismo of street racing, so if you're not interested in challenging realism hitch a ride some place else.

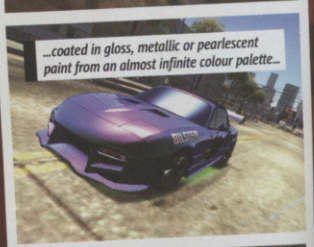
Master the handling and the respect will follow. Juiced's also based in a fictional Cali-style city, with each of the eight districts run by a tuner crew. Hook up with the right people and you'll get the chance to enter races, win some cash, and earn some respect from the other crews, who'll then invite you to their race meets.

There are three main race types to master. Circuit and point-to-point races are simple first across the finish line affairs, drag racing is an intense quarter-mile blast where the fastest

SOUPED-UP, TRICKED-OUT

Here's a number: 7.2 trillion. Read it again. That's how many totally unique car set-ups Acclaim reckon you can achieve with Juiced's modification options.

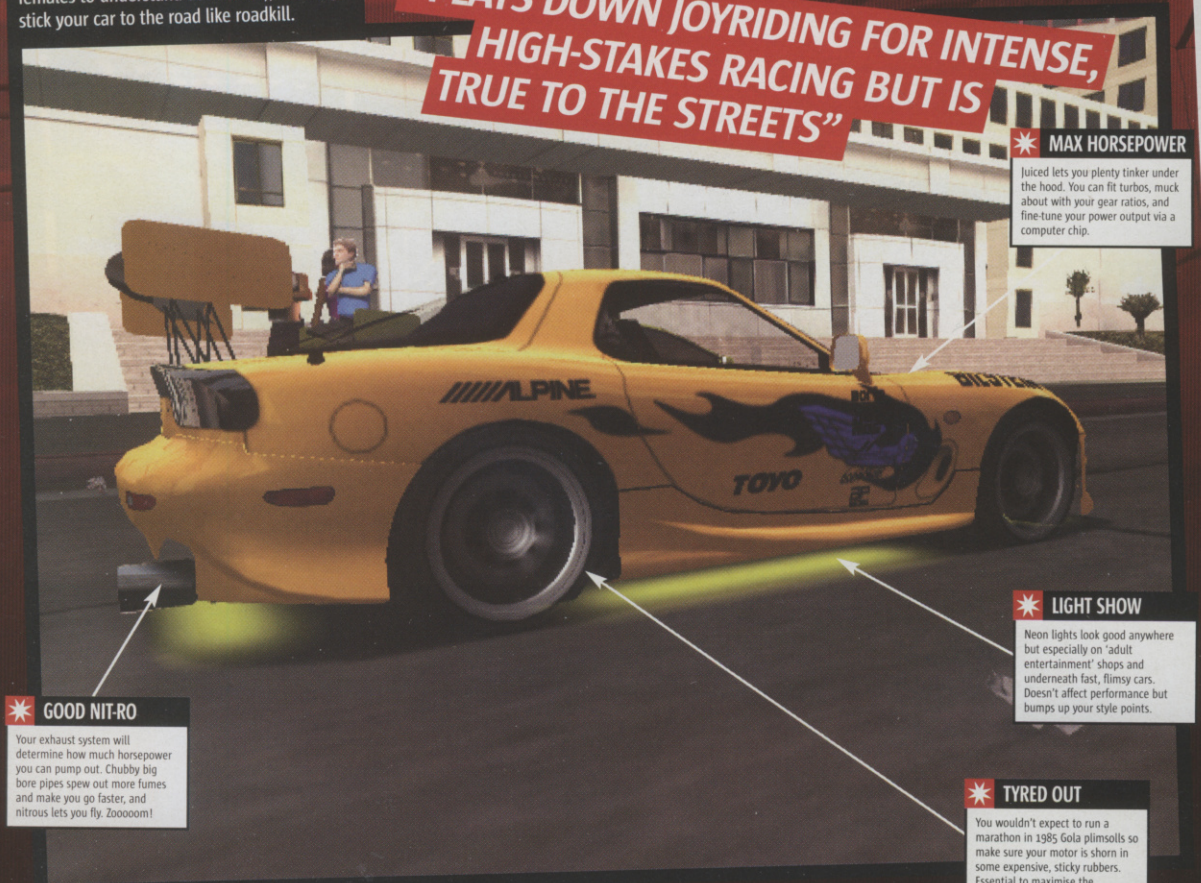
Not even saggy-papped maths gomper Carol Vorderman knows how much a trillion is, but we reckon it's a lot.



AERO RAID

Huge spoilers not only look cool and confuse girls (like the offside rule, it's impossible for females to understand downforce), fat wings stick your car to the road like roadkill.

"PLAYS DOWN JOYRIDING FOR INTENSE, HIGH-STAKES RACING BUT IS TRUE TO THE STREETS"



MAX HORSEPOWER
Juiced lets you plenty tinker under the hood. You can fit turbos, muck about with your gear ratios, and fine-tune your power output via a computer chip.

LIGHT SHOW
Neon lights look good anywhere but especially on 'adult entertainment' shops and underneath fast, flimsy cars. Doesn't affect performance but bumps up your style points.

GOOD NIT-RO
Your exhaust system will determine how much horsepower you can pump out. Chubby big bore pipes spew out more fumes and make you go faster, and nitrous lets you fly. Zoooooom!

TYRED OUT
You wouldn't expect to run a marathon in 1985 Gola plimsolls so make sure your motor is shorn in some expensive, sticky rubbers. Essential to maximise the performance of your motor.

Racing for pink slips online should be arse-clenchingly tense

The mark of intelligent AI is drivers making a pig's arse of corners

reactions win, and Show-Off meets are cruises where you have to perform tricks like donuts, 360s and boomerang turns to please the crowd.

You could customise your car to compete in all three, or tune it specifically. Even better, why not save up your cash and develop a garage stocked with pimped-out motors that you can pick and choose from? After all, Juiced's got 49 motors to covet, from Puntos to Dodge Vipers and even a ripped '69 Charger.

STAKES IS HIGH

You don't have to admire your collection on your own. Once you've earned enough respect you'll be able to start your own crew. This is the ultimate way to make a name for yourself and even lets you host your own meets with whatever races you want on the agenda.

The online modes mean that Juiced's car culture isn't limited to your bedroom, either. Take your rep and your cars online and you'll be able to race for pride, cash, or even the pink slip to your beloved motor. Lose and you can kiss its sparkly arse goodbye – win and you've got a new motor for your garage that you can then use in the single-player game. With constant online rankings and such big prizes at stake Juiced's online mode could develop into a worldwide community.

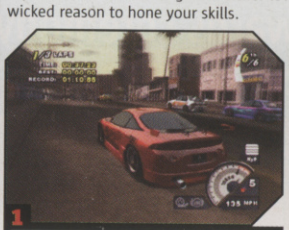
It's not for casual cruisers but Juiced could surprise U2 by nailing the petrol-soaked communities at the heart of hardcore car culture. It might play down the joyriding for intense, high stakes racing, but it's true to the streets. You've got to respect that. ✷

Hassling AI drivers encourages them to muck up – just make sure you keep you distance when they do

NO CLAIMS BONUS

Time to get real, son. In Juiced, every dink and shunt puts a dent in your wallet as much as your bodywork.

Batter your motor around tracks and you're going to be keeping the panel beaters in diamond-tipped arse-scratchers, especially when you've scuffed some top-dollar mods. You're gonna either love it or hate it, but we reckon it's a wicked reason to hone your skills.

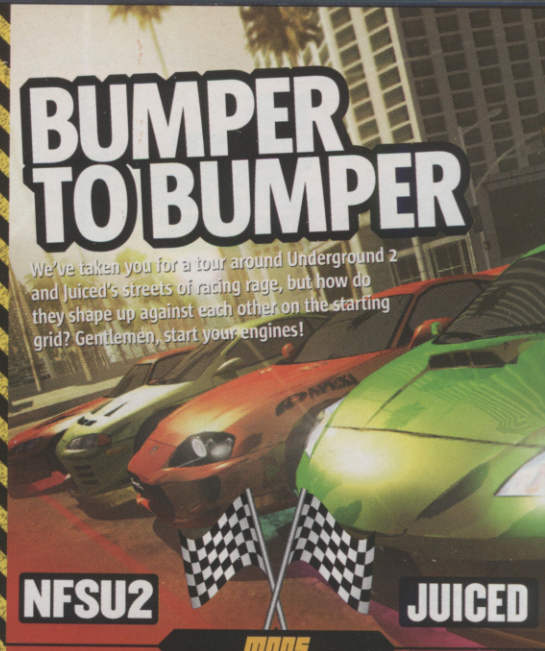


1 "Hey baby, check out my trick Mitsu Eclipse. Fancy me? Pink or brown, doll?"

2 "Oh bollocks. It's alright love, it's just a scratch. The back seat's intact, know what I'm saying?"

3 CRASH! "Funky arse. No, honestly, it's fine. It's just a wee head wound. Spit or swallow...?"

4 Other drivers won't hesitate to shunt your flimsy car's arse into walls. Nobheads



MODS

WINNER NFSU2

Thirty-plus cars, 23 tweakable performance upgrades, 10-15 cosmetic mods for each model including the hottest new trick-outs on the street.

Forty-nine motors, nine types of performance upgrade with tweakable specs, 11 mods and three paint types. Nothing too outrageous or fashionable.

MOTORS

DEAD HEAT

Over 30 four-wheeled nob enhancers including Japanese rice rockets like the Nissan 350Z, tuners' hot new favourite Mazda RX-8, and even some huge US 4x4s.

A grand total of 49 gas-guzzlers from wee monkeys like Fiat Puntos and Renault Clios to big piss-off American-style monsters like Dodge Vipers and Mustangs.

HANDLING

WINNER JUICED

Arcadey and faster than a fart in space but really difficult to get the arse-end to slide out, making quick turns and powerslides feel a bit weird.

Closer to Gran Turismo than Need For Speed. Lots of wheelspin, lots of slidey behinds, lots of collisions with barriers until you get the hang.

CULTURE

WINNER NFSU2

It might not be totally true to life but Underground 2 makes car culture so cool even Jesus wants in on it. Always gets the atmosphere spot on.

The cars and mods are great, but the colour scheme's a bit girly, the menus are a bit crap, and there's some dudes doing robot dancing in overalls.

ONLINE

WINNER JUICED

Right now we're looking at four players free-roaming the city or a multitude of pick-up-and-play race modes where you can make a name for yourself on the scene. More news soon.

Has the potential to be Gotham 2-esque in scope and scale, with the added lure of razzing your own personalised ride online and snatching other racer's motors. Mind they don't nick yours off you, though.

FINAL VERDICT

Packing more horsepower than a Clydesdale with a nuke up its arse and showing off more mods than Michael Jackson's face, Underground 2 and Juiced are neck-and-neck at the street racer finish line. At this stage it's looking like a photo finish – we'll be looking at it real close and bringing you the final result soon. **Graeme**

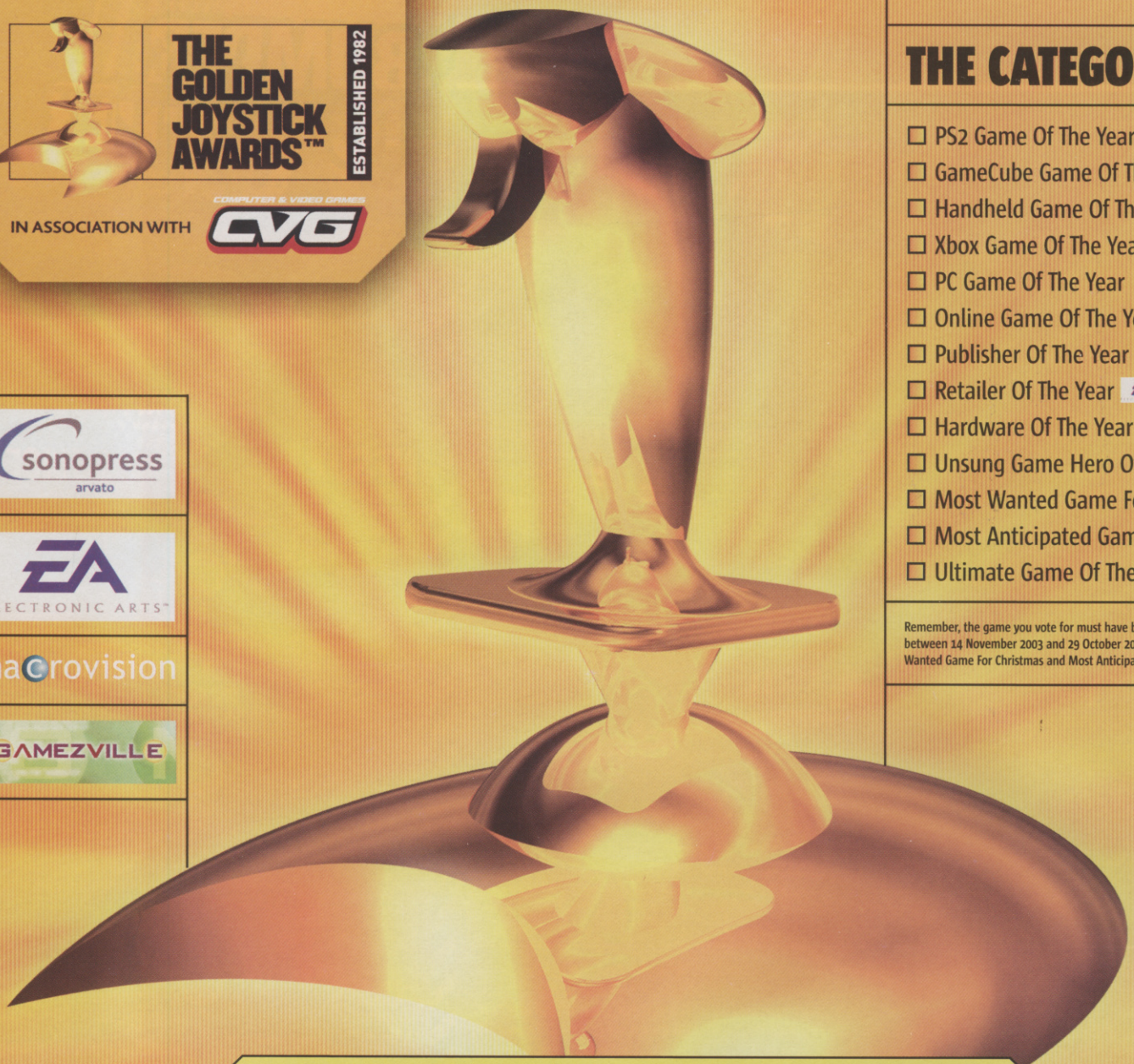
JUICED

NFSU2

THE GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS™

ESTABLISHED 1982

IN ASSOCIATION WITH CVG



THE CATEGORIES

- ☐ PS2 Game Of The Year
- ☐ GameCube Game Of The Year
- ☐ Handheld Game Of The Year
- ☐ Xbox Game Of The Year
- ☐ PC Game Of The Year
- ☐ Online Game Of The Year
- ☐ Publisher Of The Year
- ☐ Retailer Of The Year
- ☐ Hardware Of The Year
- ☐ Unsung Game Hero Of The Year
- ☐ Most Wanted Game For Christmas
- ☐ Most Anticipated Game For 2005
- ☐ Ultimate Game Of The Year

Remember, the game you vote for must have been released in the UK between 14 November 2003 and 29 October 2004, apart from Most Wanted Game For Christmas and Most Anticipated Game For 2005.

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THE GOLDEN JOYSTICK AWARDS™ 2004

Gaming's most prestigious awards ceremony is back, and you get to choose the winners!

What's been eating up your game time this year? Do you absolutely adore one game while your mate always thinks something else is better? Then make sure your favourite games of 2004 get the recognition they deserve by voting for them in this year's swanky Golden Joystick Awards!

See, the Golden Joysticks Awards are voted for by you guys. There are no dodgy dealings, no 'surprise' winners and no corporate fat cats deciding who wins big. Fact is you choose the winners, so it was no surprise that Grand Theft Auto: Vice City scooped the Ultimate Game Of The Year award at 2003's Golden Joystick Awards ceremony, but can San Andreas do the same again this year? Will Halo 2 be your hot game for Christmas?

At the end of August, all of the current votes will be counted to produce a shortlist for each category. You've then got just a couple more months to make sure your hot games of 2004 get down to the final few. Voting couldn't be easier, it's all done online, and, because everyone who votes gets entered into a prize draw, there's a chance that you get to attend the glamorous event on November 5! What are you waiting for – get voting, now!

HOW TO ENTER

Want to get your vote in early? Go for it, because the voting website is up and running and we're waiting for you NOW!

www.goldenjoystick.co.uk

ALEX SIMMONS

"Picking my Ultimate Game Of The Year ain't easy. On one hand, I've spent far too much time pimping up my ride and burning through neon-lit streets in Need For Speed Underground.

"But then Rainbow Six 3 took over my life for far too long – I couldn't even walk down the street without shimmying along walls for cover, ferchrissakes! If I had to pick one? Gotta be Need For Speed I guess.

I also loved Prince Of Persia, which was a bit overlooked by you guys. See, we gave it a fat ol' 89 per cent and called it an ace platformer, but I reckon most of you lot didn't give it a chance because the main dude wears stupid pointy shoes. But it's great, it really is, and that's why I'd give it the Golden Joystick Unsung Hero award.

"But I'd trade in all these classics to get my hands on the new Zelda game on Cube. It looks AMAZING! Ocarina Of Time and Majora's Mask are my favourite games of all time and Wind Waker was class, but I reckon this is gonna blow it out of the water! Most Anticipated Game, no question."

PETE WALKER

"Yeah, Mike and Paul have voted for it too, but you just can't fault Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow. The genius multiplayer pushes it well beyond the scope of the original – especially online.

"Stealth games should be full of heart-stopping moments as you hold your breath waiting for your cover to be blown and all hell to kick off – and you get that big-time in PT. Being a Spy hanging from the ceiling as a Merc hunting you passes warily below is the sort of adrenaline-fuelled moment that gaming's all about. It's definitely my online game of the year.

"You can keep your nuclear-powered PC graphics cards and your GBA movie players – the light-sensitive Boktai GBA cart was what stood out for me. You've got to admire Kojima for trying to do something totally outside the box. Okay, so overall it's not the greatest handheld game out there, but the light-related gameplay features are pretty unique. And hey, it's not just another lazy-assed fekking SNES port either. Hardware Of The year, for sure!"

MIKE COOPER

"My Most Wanted Game For Christmas has to be Halo 2. Playing its team-based online multiplayer at this year's E3 show was one of the coolest console experiences I've ever had.

"Bungie's master blaster doesn't only look like superior beings have created it, it plays like nothing else on this planet! And the new Clan system, with your own insignia, is gonna be heavy.

I really love Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow too – it'd be my Online Game Of The Year, even though I wasn't convinced by the sound of the whole third-person Spies vs first-person Mercenaries thing at first. But once I hooked up to Xbox Live and entered my first round I knew I'd entered an inescapable world. Nut-pulsing tension, ultra-slick visuals, killer tactics! I'm a huge stealth fan and this has got to be the ultimate stealth experience.

"But my Ultimate Game Of The Year is definitely Grand Theft Auto: San Andreas. This month I spent an afternoon with Rockstar's menace to society, and witnessed more flashes of epic genius and dynamite action in those few hours than I've seen in any other game this year. I can't imagine another game spewing up a tenth of the thrills that San Andreas is cooking up. It's gotta be 2004's ultimate champ."

PAUL DAVIES

"For me there's only one real contender for Ultimate Game Of The Year – Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow.

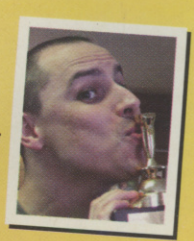
"When you're going through a low period with games it takes something special to switch back on, and it was Pandora Tomorrow that made me believe games can be great again. I really admire the way the stealth concept is kept so tight throughout the missions but never gets tiresome, and that such a creative effort was made with the Spy vs Merc network mode. It was an absolute pleasure to review this game.

"I also think Electronic Arts deserves a Golden Joystick award. See, whether the head honchos at EA are big fans of Spider-Man or not, the über-publisher is certainly abiding by the motto 'With great power comes great responsibility'. And EA has proved beyond doubt that it truly believes in both depth and quality in its line-up, and is really leading the way in terms of game interaction. As a publisher it always stays 100 per cent true to the expectations of a major license – sports-related, movie-related or otherwise."

GRAEME BOYD

"Champion Manager Season 03/04 rules! And I am the greatest football manager ever. In two seasons I took Aberdeen from the bottom of the Premier League to the Champions League, and all it took was several hundred hours tinkering with words and numbers on my PC screen.

"Champ Manager is the beautiful game shorn of all the glitz and glamour but throbbing with the kind of passion statistics shouldn't be able to convey. Stupidly addictive and endlessly consuming, Champ Manager's not a matter of life and death – it's much more important than that."



JAIME SMITH

"Pro Evo 4! That's what I want for Christmas. It looks awesome, you just know it'll play even better than Pro Evo 3 and it's coming out on Xbox too (please God let it be online).

"Pro Evo 3 has to be one of the top ten best games ever – it's as good as Ocarina Of Time in my opinion. The new features in 4 sound cool, but it's the way the gameplay's been refined that make the next instalment in the series so exciting. With 4 you just know that Konami will iron out the flaws you never knew existed. I can't wait.

"For 2005 I want the new Zelda on GBA. I play my Game Boy more than anything else and I know that the first, original Zelda for the system will be an epic. I bet they'll do a limited edition version too – I want that!"

KRIS BARRATT

"There are so many great games to choose from I don't know where to start! Castlevania would get my vote for PS2 Game Of The Year. Sure, it's not technically the greatest game in the world, but I've been a fan of the series for ages and I loved this one.

"Same with Ikaruga – Treasure is one of my favourite developers and this GameCube masterpiece kicks ass. It's so frantic it'll make your nose bleed! In fact I'm kinda surprised that more kids haven't been hospitalised by fits brought on by the amazing explosions and lighting effects!

"What else? Ninja Gaiden is my Xbox Game Of The Year. You can run on water, up and around walls AND behead freaky looking mutants! What more could you possible want?!"

"And the winner is..."

Well, it's obviously far too early to say. But let CVG's team of experts fill you in on what they think will walk away with a Golden Joystick award this November.

COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG
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You read it right. You're not dreaming. You can pinch the crap out of your arm but you won't wake up. This is the real deal: you could be one of the first people in Britain – no, wait... IN EUROPE – to own a PSP!

Imagine strolling along the street like a pimp playing your PSP, possibly with an imaginary wah-wah funk soundtrack twanging in your head. Attractive members of the opposite sex will want to rub up against you and, if you live somewhere a bit rough, you're 100% guaranteed to get viciously mugged. So be careful.

Unless you've been dead recently, you'll know the PSP will be the most powerful handheld ever, with visuals that will rival the PS2! So, damn it, how do you win this stupidly amazing prize? All you have to do is think up the most amazing, awesome, nipple-stiffening and trouser-tenting PSP game you can, fill in the coupon and send it to us quick smart. We'll cast our critical eyes over them, and the best entry will win a PSP!* We've even squeezed some spunky concepts out of our brain pipes to get you thinking. We'll be showing the best entries in the mag, so get thinking, get scribbling, and send your game design to:

Gimmie a PSP! CVG, 9 Dallington St, London, EC1V 0BQ

***We reserve the right to ruthlessly finger the PSP with greasy paws and rub it in 'private' areas before we send it to you.**

OUR GREAT IDEAS

These ideas are so good that you might as well give up now. If these don't become real games soon, we give up.

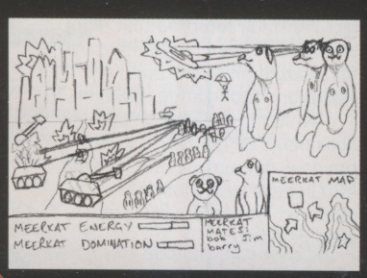
RISE OF THE MEERKATS

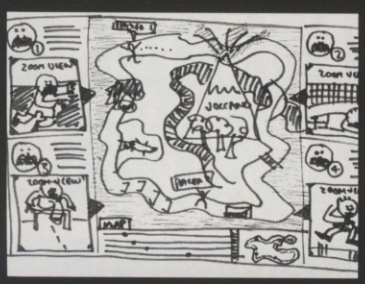
© GRAEME BOYD

I love meerkats, and the PSP is perfect for a game that features their crazy standing up-antics and endless staring.

You play a meerkat. But no ordinary meerkat. You've got laser beams for eyes. It's a third-person strategy-action game where you destroy humankind by positioning your meerkat, standing very still, staring at tanks and soldiers, then zapping the crap out of them with your laser eyes. Here's the cool bit though: it's multiplayer, so you can join forces with hundreds of other meerkats, stand very still in a huge meerkat mass, and combine your laser eye power.

That or a football management game.





DIDDY THOMPSON'S MINI-MEGA-TATHLON

© J SMITH 2004

It's basically a cross between Track 'n' Field, Wario Ware, Micro Machines and Theme Park World (take out the crap bits and keep the best)

You are tiny sports star D Thompson (only 1cm tall – see pic) who, after mastering conventional athletics, decides to venture into the world of micro-olympics and enter the first ever mega-tathlon. Created by a team of tiny evil sports nobodies, the 'M-T' is the greatest test of skill, strength and endurance ever devised.

Each level consists of a series of minute,'wacky' and complex obstacle courses. Diddy has to race against other Diddy clones, winning money on the outcome, which can be spent on steroids to boost performance.

The best bit is the Olympik-Konstructa-Kit© which lets you build your own courses, download new tracks, and other tedious things that are strangely more fun than actually playing the game.

STROLL3R

© ALEX SIMMONS, 2004

You're an overweight, odorous mini-cab driver forced to walk the crime-riddled streets of Ilford when the keys to your Vauxhall Astra mysteriously go missing. Did you lose them down the back of the sofa? Or did the missus have 'em away when she went shopping down the supermarket? Only you and your feet can find the answer.

Stroll3r's ground-breaking HikeAir™ game engine boasts the most advanced walking physics EVER seen. Walk, run, shuffle, waddle, crawl and even moonwalk through the back streets of seedy Essex. Power up your plimsolls with different in-soles – Athlete's Foot gives a speed boost, MaxAir makes you jump higher and Pump kicks out a stink so bad nearby enemies double-over and puke their guts up.

You can also drive cars later in the game – mostly souped-up Vauxhall Novas that were modded at some Max Power convention or other – but this will be hastily put-together and will look and play rubbish.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER BRAZILIAN BEACH EDITION

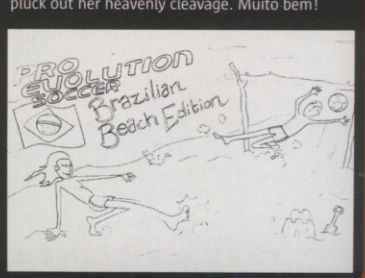
© MIKE COOPER

Hot sand, driftwood for goalposts and golden Brazilian chickitas bouncing with delight in dental floss bikinis as you pump home a scorcher.

PES: Brazilian Beach Edition would be a five-a-side version of Pro Evo, with the focus on fast flashy futébol and impressing awesomely bump-mapped babes, thrilling them into nakedness.

The gameplay and the physics engine would be tighter than Miss Brazil's butt cheeks, but the attitude is fun and flamboyance. Overhead kicks are standard, with more extravagant moves chucked in to get the girls sweating. Plus there'll be loads of tricks, like Ronaldinho's insane Flip-Flap move and Roberto Carlos' step-over heel kick.

In fact, the games are going to be so hot that when time's up you have to take your team into the sea to cool off. You'll tour the beaches of Brazil, and when you win a tournament a topless honey presents you with a cup which you have to pluck out her heavenly cleavage. Muito bem!



READ THIS FIRST!

Don't just spout some crap about saving Princess Fannypad from the Dark Lord Nutbuttah. Think about what kind of game would be perfect for PSP.

Okay, so we've taken the piss a little with some of our dumbass ideas, but extra points will be awarded for ideas especially suited to portable gaming, concepts so fresh they taste like peppermint, as well as anything that sounds completely mental and makes us laugh. Keep in mind:

1. **MASSIVE SCREEN:** How can you use PSP's big-ass display in cool ways? Maybe a game about something really long, like an oil tanker.
2. **WIRELESS MULTIPLAYER:** PSP's in-built Wi-Fi means multiplayer gaming is going to be big on Sony's handheld – exploit it!
3. **ANALOG STICK:** Think about how your game will make the most of PSP's controls – this is the first ever hand-held to have an analog stick

Once again, send your earth-shattering game ideas to: Gimmie a PSP, CVG, 9 Dallington Street, London, EC1V 0BQ

CUT THIS FORM OUT

GAME NAME

AS LONG AS YOU LIKE

SCREENSHOT

DRAW YOUR PIC HERE

ACTUAL SIZE

CVG WIN A PSP COMPETITION ENTRY FORM

GAME IDEA

NO MORE THAN 200 WORDS PLEASE!

★TRIANGLE:

★CIRCLE:

★SQUARE:

★X:

YOUR DETAILS

★HELLO, MY NAME IS:

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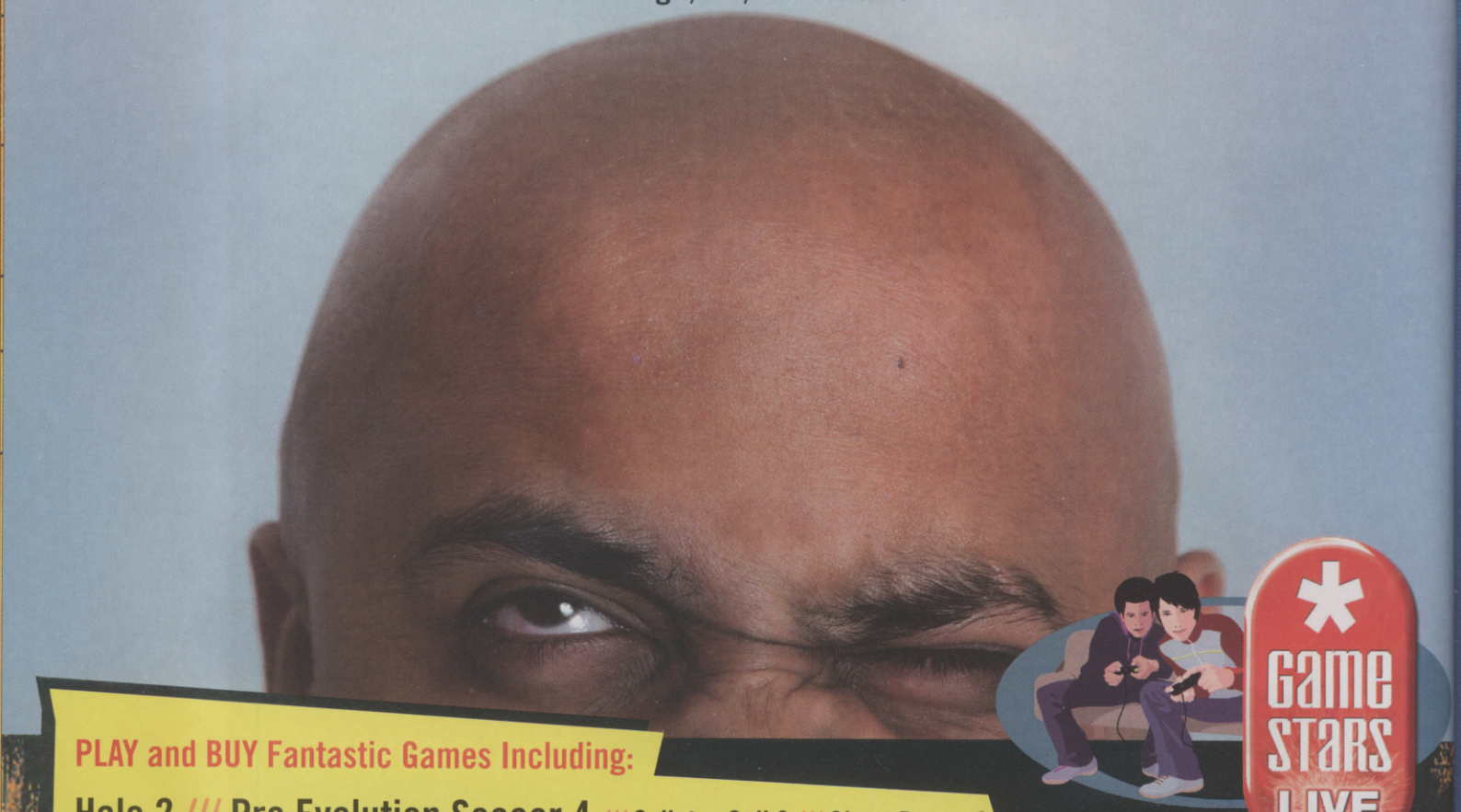
★EVENING TELEPHONE NO:

★EMAIL:

SEE IT FIRST /// PLAY IT FIRST /// BUY IT FIRST!

"Blasted trapdoor gets me every time"

Dean Singh, 26, Accountant



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REVIEWS

FULLY INDEPENDENT & MULTIFORMAT ✶ TRUST NO-ONE ELSE

Spider-Man 2
He's peeled on that red spandex and started crawling up console walls once again – Peter Parker's back, and we reckon he's here to stay

Psi-Ops
A shooter where you have to use your brains – to psychically massacre your foes. Get a load of Psi-Ops' crazy cranial carnage right now!

Wario Ware Inc: Mega Party
It looks like a GBA game, but it plays on GameCube. Find out why we reckon this is the funniest game ever

SEXY SILVER SCREEN SPECIAL

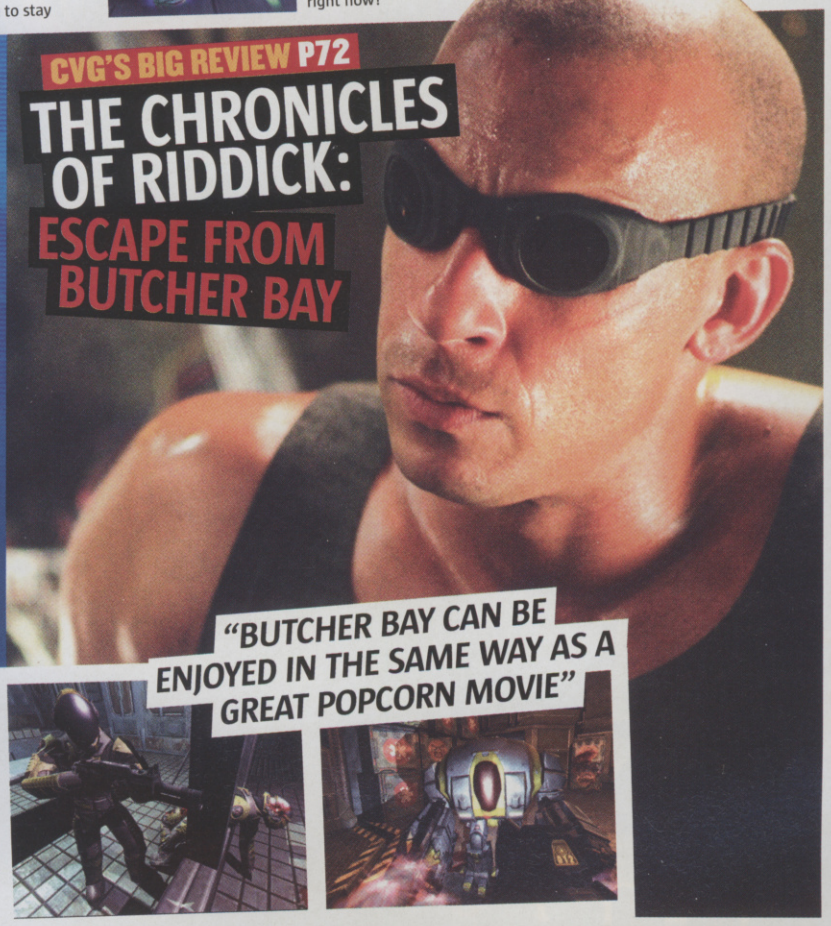
Summer's here, and that means two things – fit girls teasing us with their acorn-smuggling crop tops, and cinemas stuffed with blockbuster gold. So, then, it's only natural that this month's reviews are packed with silky ladies' skin and the coolest superstars. Flip over and see how Vin Diesel shapes up in his brutal game debut as Riddick, then flick to p84 to discover if Halle Berry's gyrating hips can save Catwoman from being a minging pile of cat litter. Then there's the surprise hit of the summer, Spidey 2 – so who needs to go out when the sun's shining?!

Mike Cooper

Mike Cooper *Reviews Editor*

CVG'S BIG REVIEW P72

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY



"BUTCHER BAY CAN BE ENJOYED IN THE SAME WAY AS A GREAT POPCORN MOVIE"

THIS MONTH

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY ..... 72 (XBOX)
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IMPORT! SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM ..... 101 (PS2, XBOX)

HOW CVG'S REVIEWS WORK

CVG's reviews are the most accurate, informative and downright honest you'll ever read. Here's why...

CVG VERDICT BOX

CVG SCORES

By popular demand, CVG has switched to percentages to bring you the most precisely calculated scores ever!

95+ DIAMOND Award

90-94+ GOLD Award

85-89+ SILVER Award

75-84+ You'd be pleased to get this as a gift, though next month you'll probably forget you own it.

65-74+ Some fun to be had but one best bought by your mate so you can get a lend of it.

55-64+ A pretty average game that's unlikely to set the gaming world on fire on any level.

41-54+ You really shouldn't even consider renting one of these, let alone buying one.

UNDER 40 STINKER Award

THE CVG AWARDS SYSTEM

We score everything out of 100, to give you the most accurate reviews ever. And if a game is exceptional, we'll give it an Award. So you know what a diamond game it is...

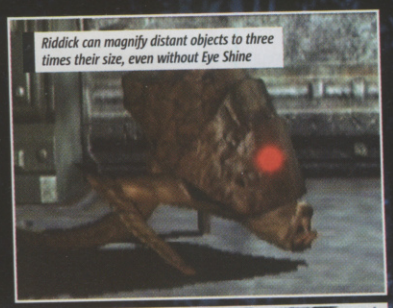
DIAMOND Award
The most coveted award a game can get. It's worth buying the console just to play it!

GOLD Award
A bloody amazing game you've got to own. It's brilliant in almost every respect, so go get it!

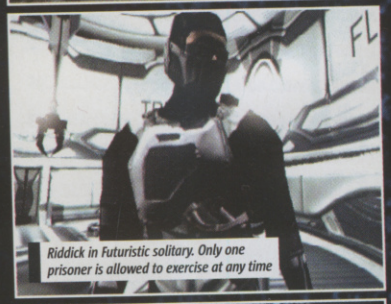
SILVER Award
Highly recommended by CVG's experts. May not be anything ground-breaking but it's still ace.

STINKER Award
More abominable than a reality TV show, set in a barbers, called "I'm a Yeti..."

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
AUGUST	COST: £39.99 PLAYERS: 1	PUB: VIVENDI DEV: STARBREEZE STUDIOS WWW.RIDDICKGAME.COM CONTACT: 01189 209 111

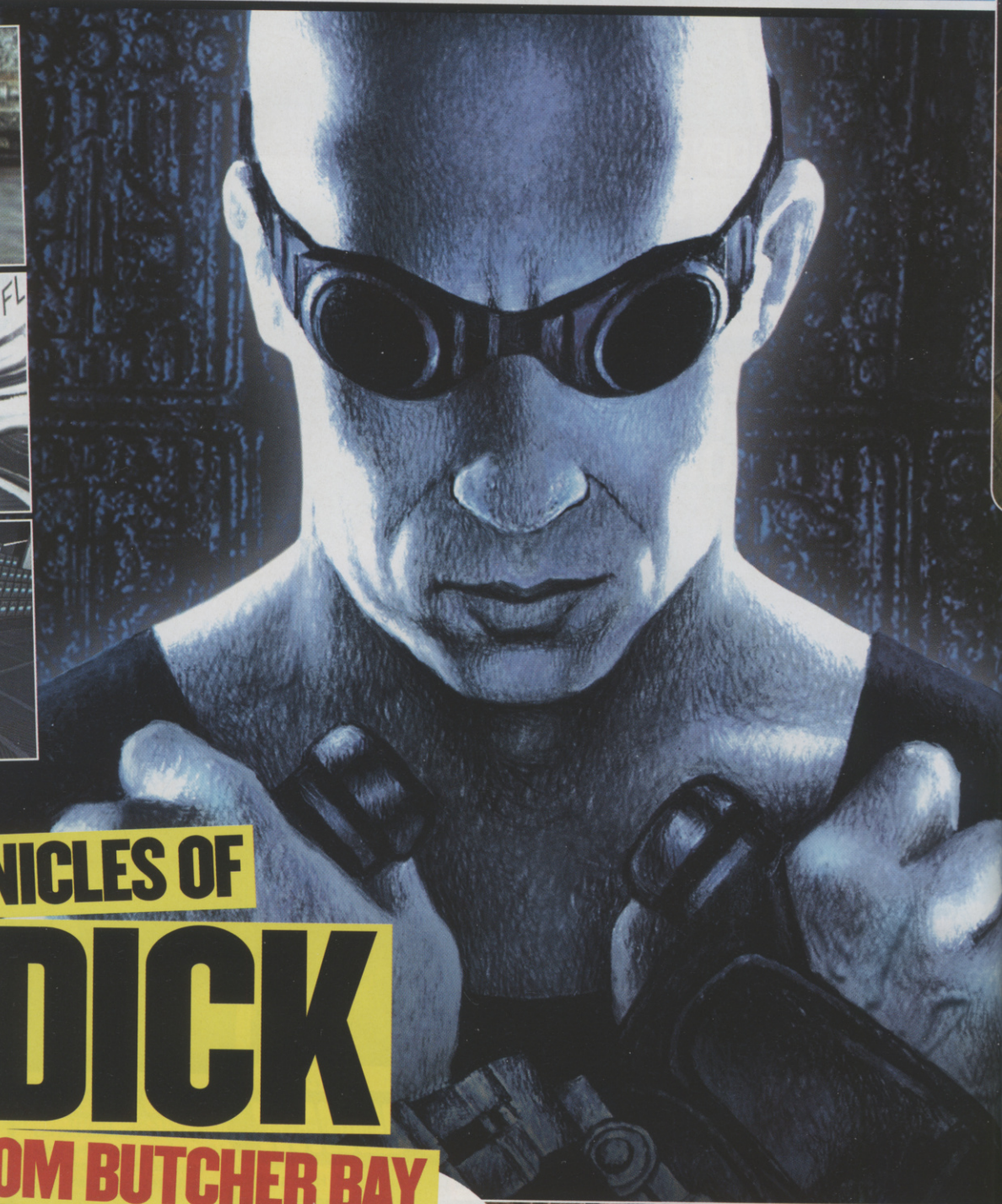


Riddick can magnify distant objects to three times their size, even without Eye Shine



Riddick in Futuristic solitary. Only one prisoner is allowed to exercise at any time

These little droids are annoying but harmless. Hit 'em with a stick and they'll collapse



THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK

ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

Could mean lights out for the competition as Riddick goes for the jugular

The larger aliens have babies riding on their backs that jump off and bite at yer ankles

If you can't find the shortcut through the vents, you'd better call the elevator instead

Vin Diesel is one of those heroes who we regularly see emerge unscathed from even the biggest of Hollywood explosions. This month, indestructible Vin is gonna detonate something pretty huge of his own, with his first starring role in an action game.

The dynamite question is: will this thing totally blow you away, or just gently ruffle your arse feathers? Well, we've played it right through and here's what we think of the show.

RISE AND SHINE RIDDICK

A bit like the universe, it all started with Pitch Black. Pitch Black, in case you're some kind of action movie dodging weirdo, was a so-so sci-fi flick that introduced us to deadly convict Richard B Riddick (played by none other than Vincent Unleaded), and his bounty-hunting handler Johns.

Although it was released back in 2000, the film is the second chapter in The Chronicles Of Riddick, and it's worth watching to see Riddick emerge as the cool anti-hero with the ability to see in the dark.

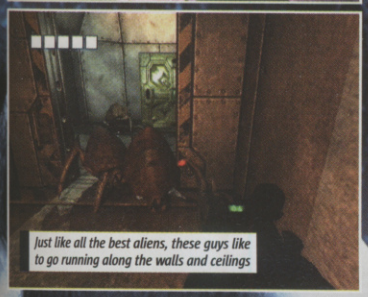
Caught you in my spotlight, mate! Say your last prayers and beg me to make it quick

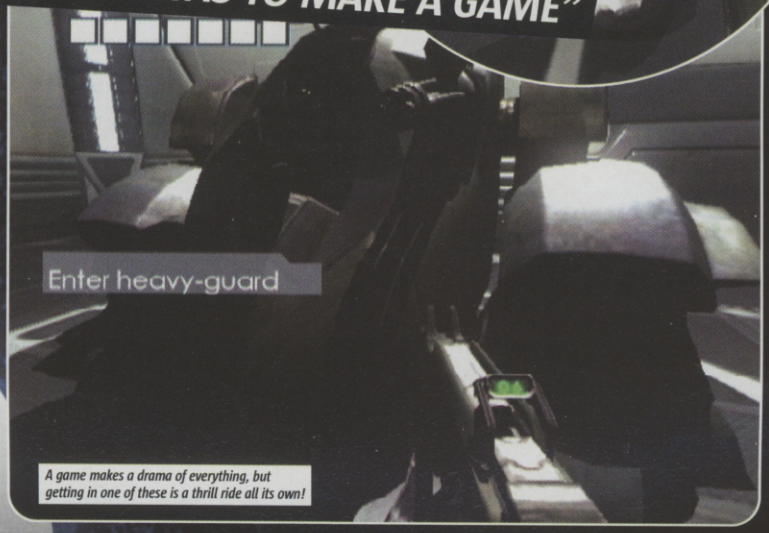
If someone suddenly puts the lights on you'd better quit from using Eye Shine, quick!

Not only do these Heavy Guards rain mini-gun fire on your ass, they shoot rockets too!

"IT'S VERY EXPENSIVE AND TIME CONSUMING TO MAKE A MOVIE PREQUEL. THE NEXT BEST OPTION WAS TO MAKE A GAME"

Don't know what these dudes have been eating, but they make a hell of an explosion


Just like all the best aliens, these guys like to go running along the walls and ceilings

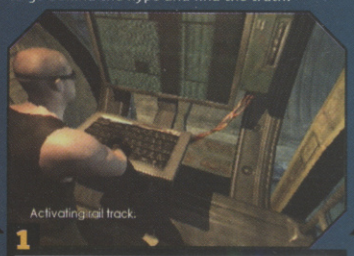


A game makes a drama of everything, but getting in one of these is a thrill ride all its own!

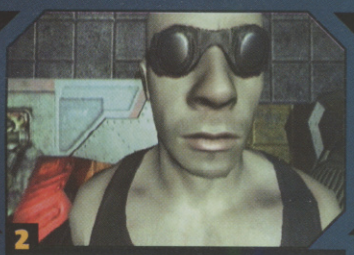
BELIEVE THE HYPE?

Everyone is talking about Chronicles Of Riddick after a shock debut at the E3 show in LA.

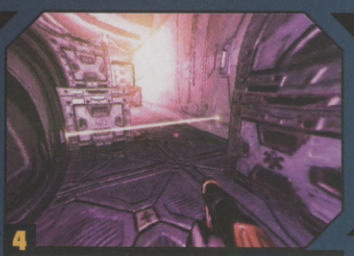
Back in May, Riddick bedazzled visitors who arrived expecting the likes of Doom 3 and Half Life 2 to be the talk of the town. But Escape From Butcher Bay's ultra-realistic visuals and big-movie styling really stole the show. Now it's time for us to go behind the hype and find the truth.



1 ■ Get ready to unlock the secrets behind what makes this game really tick, good and bad


2 ■ Vin Diesel as he looks in his first videogame, a damn good likeness, you've got to say

3 ■ Starbreeze under the direction of Vin Diesel have played it pretty smart with the game


4 ■ We were all really looking forward to using Riddick's Eye Shine to get the advantage

LIKE THIS? TRY THESE

If you can't get enough of Vin's myopic muscle-man, then you can easily get hold of Pitch Black on DVD. But there's more Riddick gubbins coming along soon.

First up is an animated DVD movie due for release in August called Dark Fury. This manga merchandise fills in the gap between Pitch Black and the new movie sequel.

1 ■ The Dark Fury DVD is directed by Peter Chung, who also did 'Matriculated' for the Animatrix series

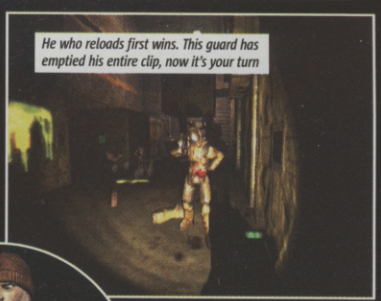
2 ■ Give Pitch Black a rent if you haven't seen it. It's not awesome, but it's dead spooky and has kick-ass SFX

3 ■ Richard B Riddick, aka Vincent Diesel, as he looked back in the original Pitch Black movie

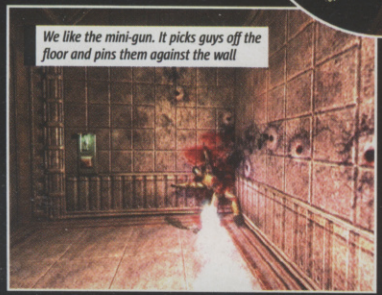
4 ■ Not your usual sort of hero, our Riddick was convicted of murdering an entire squad of team mates

OVERNIGHT SUCCESS

As you probably know, Pitch Black has a major movie sequel due very soon at your cinema, called The Chronicles Of Riddick. A week before that this Xbox game Escape From Butcher Bay comes out, and is a prequel to Pitch Black, making this the first episode in the Chronicles. The thinking behind this onslaught of all things Riddick is that the hero of the tale doesn't benefit from decades of comic book lore, or trilogies of novels. So, in order for the Riddster to stand tall with the likes of fellow legendary leader types Conan and Luke Skywalker, there needed to be a lot of blanks filling in.

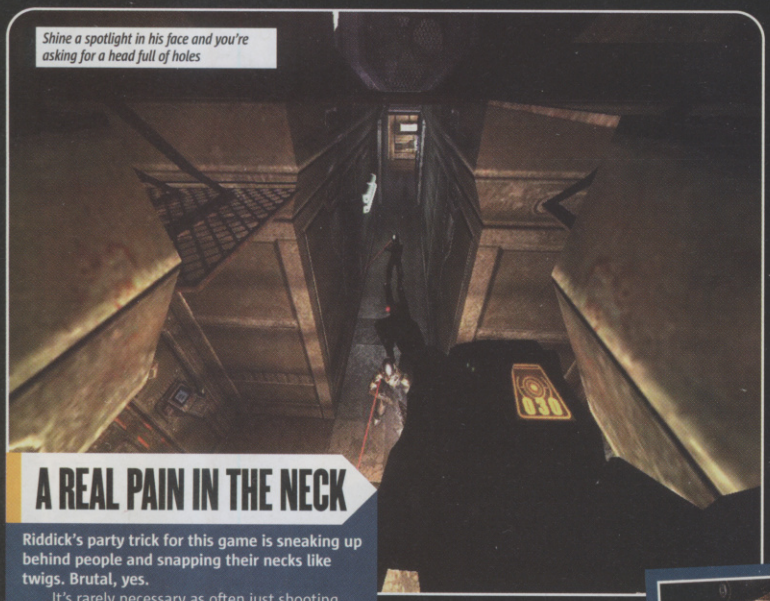

He who reloads first wins. This guard has emptied his entire clip, now it's your turn

Since it's very expensive and time consuming to make a movie prequel, the next best option was to make a game. This explains everything that ends up good or bad with Escape From Butcher Bay.


We like the mini-gun. It picks guys off the floor and pins them against the wall

EVERYTHING AND MORE

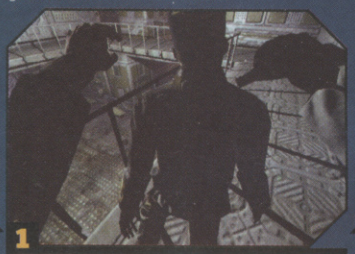
You can count the really good movie tie-ins on one hand: for every clever Star Wars game, there's an Enter The Matrix dragging you into the gutter. Thankfully, Escape From Butcher Bay is being handled by co-creators Vinnie Petrol and David Twohy (director). They are concentrating on fleshing out the hero at the centre of what would otherwise be a fairly straightforward first-person shooter. »

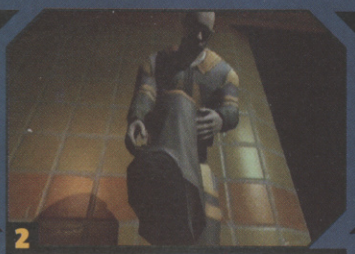

Shine a spotlight in his face and you're asking for a head full of holes

A REAL PAIN IN THE NECK

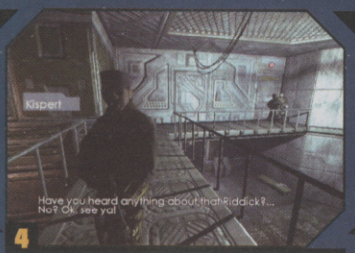
Riddick's party trick for this game is sneaking up behind people and snapping their necks like twigs. Brutal, yes.

It's rarely necessary as often just shooting will do, but you can't beat the satisfaction of pulling of a silent kill on an unawares guard. Watching their lifeless corpses crumple to the ground is well worth the hassle.

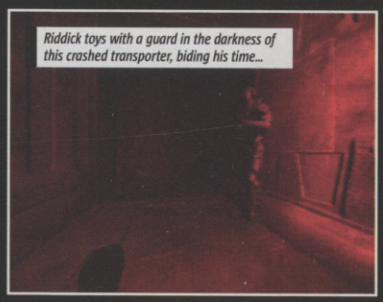

1 ■ Sneaking up to break a neck requires a bit of practice, but you'll soon master it

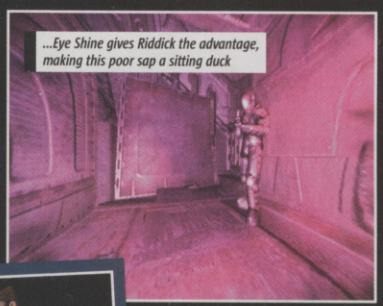

2 ■ You can have a field day snooping around the guard's HQ if you find this disguise

3 ■ Patrolling guards will let you past, then you can grab them as they walk away



4 ■ Hey what's that over there? Maybe you should check it out? (Heh. He has no idea)


Riddick toys with a guard in the darkness of this crashed transporter, biding his time...


...Eye Shine gives Riddick the advantage, making this poor sap a sitting duck

TRADING IN PAIN

Useful items such as vent tools, shivs (crude knives) and clubs can be beaten out of inmates and wardens.

Once they've been knocked unconscious, and usually killed, they drop all their belongings. If you don't want to raise alarms there are guys who sell this stuff. Saves time too, though that's not really a concern in this game.

1 ■ If you can't be bothered searching around for stuff like vent tools, come see this guy

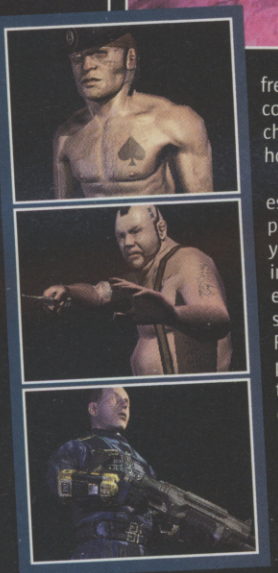
2 ■ Vent tools aren't the finest of hand-to-hand weapons, but you'll be glad to have one handy if you're rushed

3 ■ A shiv isn't very effective against an armed guard, but it'll teach lesser punks a lesson

4 ■ To take on the guards, you're going want some kind of a firearm, like this shotgun

OFF TO A FALSE START

The game kicks off with a bizarre flashback or precognition (it's hard to work out which) of Riddick escaping through the sewers of a facility that looks like Butcher Bay. This minutes-long prologue is a snapshot of the action to come – Riddick talking to captor Johns; sneaking up behind him to break his neck; running for cover to avoid deadly perimeter guns; engaging in a shotgun shootout... before he wakes up from what turns out to be a dream. Actually, he's still on board the transport ship to Butcher Bay pen, and still under the watchful eye of Johns. The game never does explain why all this happens, but it's cool, so okay. Anyway it helps us sum the game up in a nutshell: lots of talking, a fair bit of sneaking up on people and snapping their neck, plus lots of running to avoid death. By the end of it you'll feel every bit the bad-ass that dwells inside Riddick.



DEAD DON'T TALK

Soon as he is officially a prisoner inside Butcher Bay the game works hard to immerse you in the role of Riddick. You do a lot more than just look through his killer eyes, wield the knife and pull the trigger. As an inmate you're given choices to make, a certain amount of freedom to act within the confines of Riddick's character, and this affects how the game pans out.

Conversations, especially early on, are plentiful. From these you're expected to gain information on how to escape. Everyone has something to say to Riddick if you stop by and press the X button, and the big man is full of quips to answer back. You even get a multiple-choice in many instances. The choices mostly relate to how cheeky you want to make the comebacks, but with fellow inmates, you have to choose how helpful you're prepared to be in return for secrets. It turns out you'll be running quite a few little errands before you get the feel of a gun in your hands, so don't expect to be blasting an' a strafing from the word go. Fist fights are a different matter – you get to enjoy plenty of those.

HEY, DID YOU KNOW... OOF! OOF! ARRGHLE!

When you've jackhammers for fists, it's tempting to just punch info out of people. Sorry to break your heart, but this just won't work – at least most of the time it won't. Butcher Bay has machine guns attached to security cameras just about everywhere you look, and if you're caught brawling you're gunned down in seconds. It's suicide. This scenario can be mightily frustrating, but that's probably the general idea. We guess you're supposed to feel like a tiger in a

"FINDING YOUR OWN PREY ADDS TO THE TENSION AND ADDS TO THE IMMERSING NATURE OF THE GAME"

Riddick checks the rounds left in this mini-gun. Not many considering its rate of fire

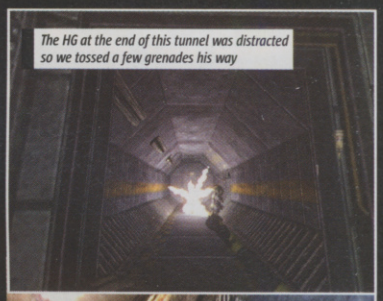
Even the toughest enemies can be dropped from a distance if your aim is perfect

As far as carbon-based life forms go, ET was far cuter. Nice bright shiny eyes on this one, mind

"IF YOU'RE CAUGHT BRAWLING, YOU'LL BE GUNNED DOWN IN SECONDS - IT'S SUICIDE!"

You might feel cool guns ablazing, but this law enforcement unit will cut you to shreds!

We hardly used the grenades first time we played through the game, but they're cool



The HG at the end of this tunnel was distracted so we tossed a few grenades his way

Even the way Riddick reloads his shotgun is done with a certain stylish menace

PREVIOUS GAMES

- This is Starbreeze Studio's debut game

HARD FACTS

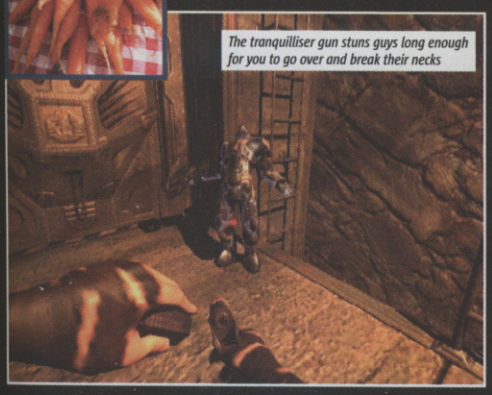
- 5 types of gun
- 6 types of melee weapon
- Voice talents of Hollywood actors
- Normal Mapping technology

DID YOU KNOW?

- The orange pigment in carrots contains vitamin A that improves dim-light vision, but only if you have a vitamin A deficiency. Eating too many carrots will only turn your skin yellow.

cage, so that when the chance comes to break loose, you are really itching at the prospect of some serious action.

In any case, there are only a few fellow inmates that really deserve a good shoeing. Most of them don't want any trouble, and would prefer it if you help them sort out whatever their sordid little problems are. There's a drug addict who needs his needle back; one of the smaller factions would like you to retrieve a snitch list, and just about everyone would like the head warden Abbott taking care of!



The tranquilliser gun stuns guys long enough for you to go over and break their necks

BARE KNUCKLE

Without giving too much away, one of the main objectives is to get into a fight with Abbott. Abbott won't show up unless you break enough heads in the Bay-approved fighting area, or be 'stupid' enough to get caught carrying drugs. This is the only way Riddick can find a way out before becoming one of the crazies. And so, for five USDs a pop (USDs being Riddicksville currency), you set about rounding up fellow cons to beat them up to buy respect, each one heftier than the last.

The ringleader gives you a name and whereabouts, then it's your responsibility to seek them out. We guess you could say finding your own prey adds to the tension and adds to the immersing nature of the game, but it's obviously to vary the pace with more walking and talking. The fist fights themselves are over in seconds once you get the timing of right and left hooks, and that's simple too. Still, fighting helps vent frustration and you feel you've accomplished more than simply being frisked and found in possession.

FIRE IN THE HOLE!

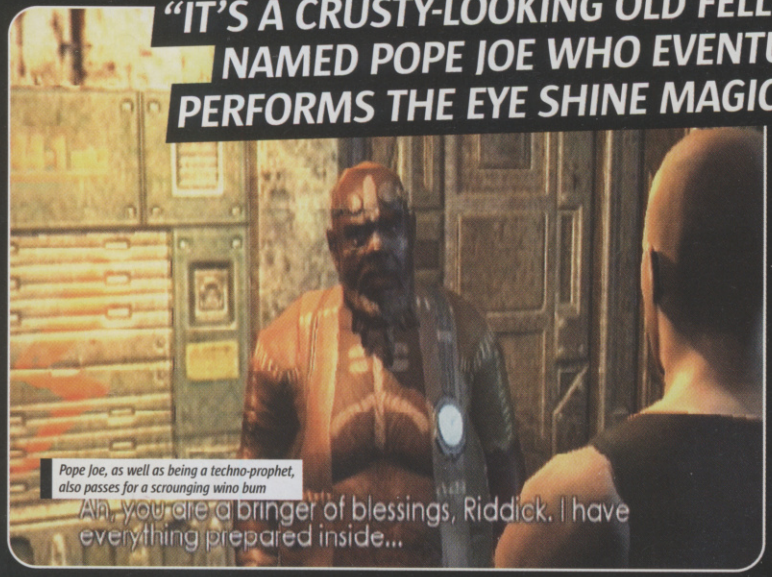
All the explosions and other special effects are movie quality. Watch those bodies fly when gas canisters are filled with hot lead. KABOOM!

Use Riddick's zoom ability to take out distant guards with headshots

■ Early in the game you find yourself chatting to loads of fellow inmates. The idea is to help them out to get them to help you become the bad-ass saviour of Butcher Bay. Working the crowd gets men on your side and gives Riddick a way out.

NOT ONE FOR CONVERSATION

"IT'S A CRUSTY-LOOKING OLD FELLER NAMED POPE JOE WHO EVENTUALLY PERFORMS THE EYE SHINE MAGIC"



Pope Joe, as well as being a techno-prophet, also passes for a scrounging wino bum

How bad-ass is that? How many machine guns is he peppering your ass with?

RIOT TONIGHT: ALL INVITED

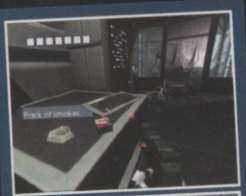
After so much pussyfooting around, you're glad of the chance to turn the guards' assault rifles and shotguns against them. Beyond a certain stage in the game, shotguns can be stolen from guards and used freely. But you need to work a little harder to use an assault rifle as these are DNA-encoded.

For a while you know how it feels to be searching the darkness with a muzzle-mounted torchlight, which is sorta cool, but the beam is a dead giveaway as to your position too. Guards can be lured by flicking the switch on and off, and you can likewise track them down by their beam. At this point the game feels like a standard FPS, with much strafing and blasting to stay alive. You start wondering when Riddick's famous Eye Shine comes into play – the ability to see in the dark. In fact this gift is granted close to halfway through the game, or feels like it.

YOUR NEW ROSE-TINTED OUTLOOK

It's a crusty-looking old feller named Pope Joe who eventually performs the magic. You're left wondering if Eye Shine is a surgical procedure or some voodoo hocus-pocus, mainly because Joe is a nutcase prophet but also because a mysterious female voice starts floating around inside Riddick's head... something about a prophecy. Thankfully she only has a few things to say before disappearing.

Now, Eye Shine turns out to be no more advantageous than night-vision goggles in any other stealth game or FPS. It simply has a cooler name, and is tinted pink instead of green. We thought Eye Shine would give Riddick a sense of ESP, somehow make him more aware through vibrations in the controller or whatever. That could've made for more intrigue, but in the end it's plain old seeing in the dark. So, cue shooting out the lights and crouching in the shadows to take aim at disoriented guards, but watch out for the ones with torches because they'll blind you. Bottom line with Eye Shine is, the concept could've been developed into so much more.



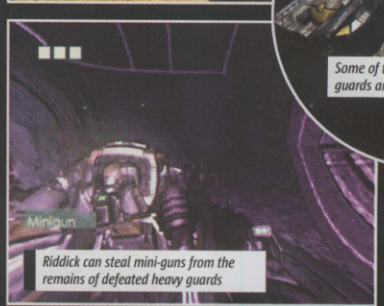
THAT BIG MOVIE FEEL

Quite often, Butcher Bay is in danger of being forgettable. What keeps you interested is the high level of graphical detail, high production Hollywood sound effects and orchestral score.

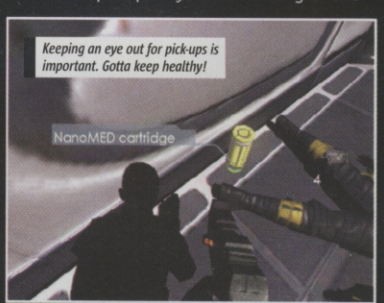
Although you spend nearly all of your time surrounded by various shades of rusty brown, or concrete grey brightened only by the orange of muzzle flash or the stark crimson blood splats, it is all very believable. Also, the way Butcher Bay is connected by a labyrinth of mine shafts and air conditioning vents is ingenious. Every step to Riddick's dramatic escape from the Spaceport you're thinking of the

There are some cool set pieces in Butcher Bay, like this alien ambush

Some of the shoot-outs with the heavy guards are immense



Riddick can steal mini-guns from the remains of defeated heavy guards

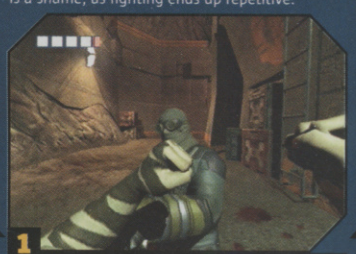


Keeping an eye out for pick-ups is important. Gotta keep healthy!

LET THE FUR FLY

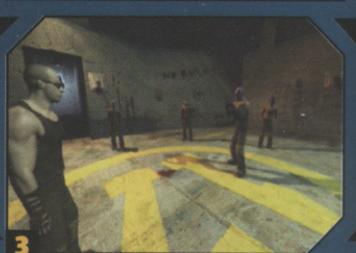
Trading punches with some goon is easy enough. You can shoot jabs, hooks and uppercuts using the L/R triggers combined with the left analogue stick.

Combos are left for you to discover, but to be honest, once you've sorted those basic left and right hooks you won't need anything else. Which is a shame, as fighting ends up repetitive.

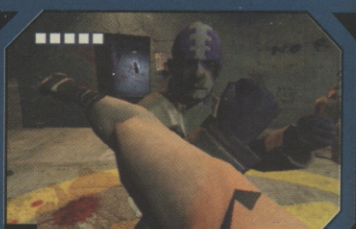


1 ■ Just because he's wearing a protective mask doesn't mean your blows won't count

2 ■ Your punches come out fast and furious causing fountains of blood to mess up the walls



3 ■ Riddick squares off to his first opponent in the ring, 100% confident of a victory



4 ■ There's no point working out tactics, just get stuck in with those left and right hooks!

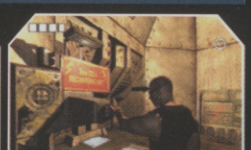
CLIMBING FAME

Whenever there's climbing up ladders or clambering over boxes to be done, the game shifts to a third-person viewpoint.

It reminds you that it's Riddick performing all the cool stunts in this game, and gives you a better idea of where he is in relation to the surroundings. It also looks pretty cool to see those bullets whizzing past his tiny ears.

■ It's easier to see where to head next using a third-person view while clambering

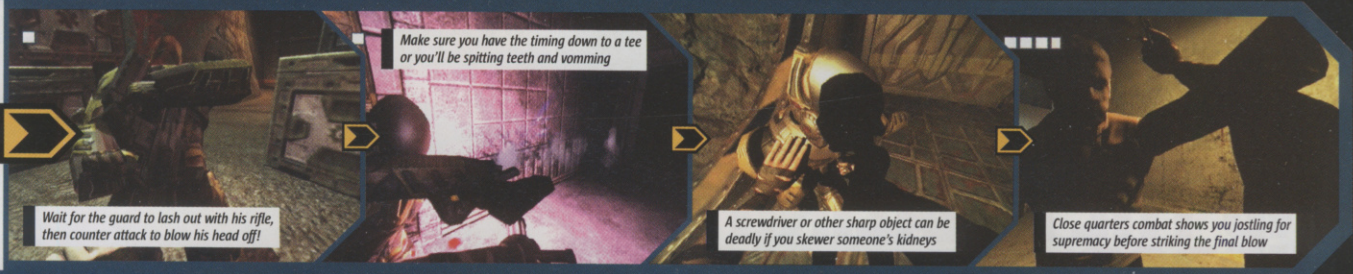
■ You can move the camera around to get a better view of what's above or below here

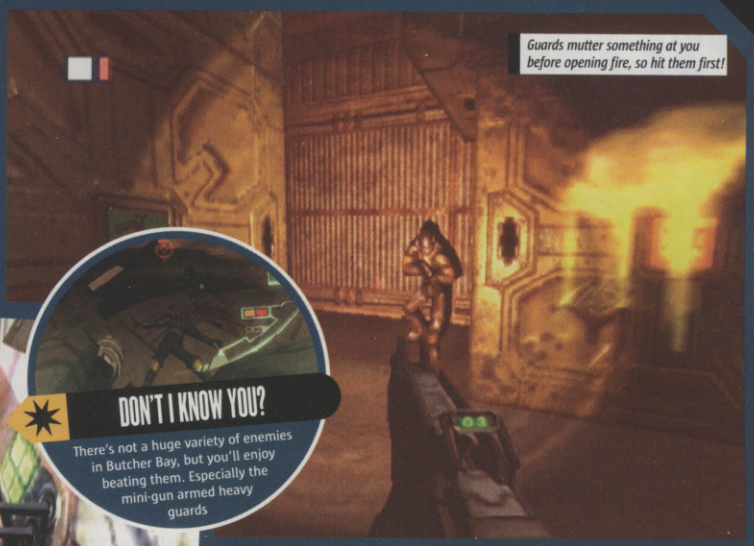


■ A third-person view is also used to show Riddick operating machines and switches

CLOSE QUARTERS COMBAT

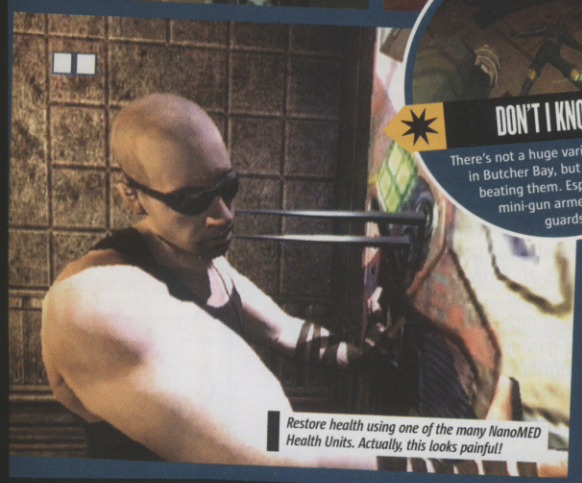
It's possible to grab a guard and turn his rifle against him, forcing him to blow off his own head. This is a neat trick that can also be applied to snapping wrists or sticking shivs into necks, and is achieved by quickly counter-attacking with the trigger button.

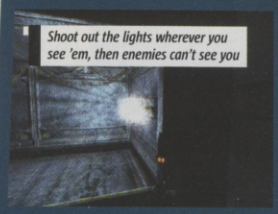


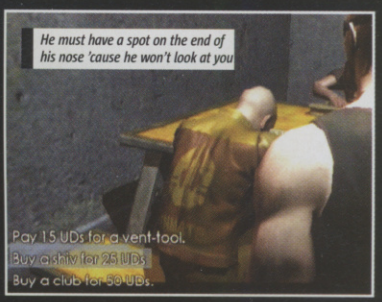


DON'T I KNOW YOU?

There's not a huge variety of enemies in Butcher Bay, but you'll enjoy beating them. Especially the mini-gun armed heavy guards







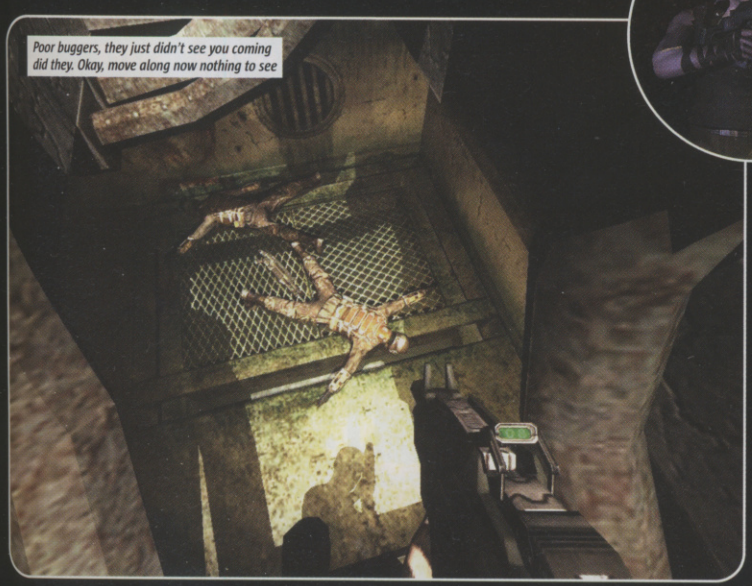
most effective possible route to freedom. Scenarios play out in a similar way to those in Splinter Cell or Metal Gear, although without the same intensity placed on stealth – you're allowed to come out guns blazing more, so it feels easier to deal with.

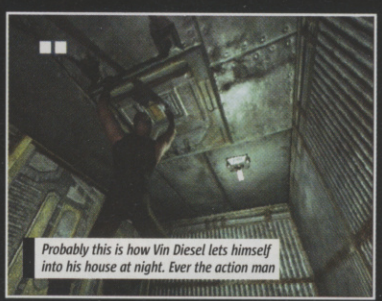
The ace up Butcher Bay's sleeve is the massively blown out of proportion confrontations with heavy-duty law enforcement equipment, culminating in one hell of a battle before the escape.

SEXY BUT SHORT LIVED

Here's the thing: as Riddick we managed the escape from Butcher Bay in less than eight hours total playing time. After that we were left reflecting on whether all the excitement was worth it, and if there's any point playing through the game at least more than once. It seems the guys at Starbreeze took this into account, giving three difficulty options: Easy, Normal, or Hard and scattering cigarette packets, or 'smokes', throughout the game to unlock pre-production sketches and a few mpeg files, should you find them. We tried the Hard setting and it only made us aware of the limitations of the weapons and wasted opportunity with Eye Shine.

On Easy, there's basically not much to worry about. So the prospects for replayability are poor. Played on Normal difficulty – as you doubtless will first time through – Escape from Butcher Bay succeeds as a gripping action-packed experience, and can be enjoyed in the same way that great popcorn movies often are. In fact, if this were a movie we'd say, "go see." As a game, we say: "go play – but bear in mind the quick exit". ✷





CVG 2ND OPINION

I reckon Paul's being a bit harsh here. Riddick might be over too quickly, but eight hours of solid-gold gameplay is better than 40 hours of boredom. This does a lot of different things extremely well while always looking cool – and making you feel cool playing it. Plus – shockeroonie! – the stealth sections are good fun and the brutal takedowns rock. Give it a shot.

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 90
Stunning to begin with, and high quality throughout. Could use a little more variation

SOUND 88
Superb explosions, and ear-shattering gunfire, Diesel and pals do the voice acting

GAMEPLAY 82
The gunplays can be a little basic and the enemies are a dumb

LASTING APPEAL 74
Anyone used to FPSs will kill this in no time, and there's no multiplayer

Are we too battle-hardened to sense the full impact of Vin's Xbox debut? More likely the game isn't packing quite the dynamite as its potential suggested.

OVERALL SCORE 83

HOW IT COMPARES
SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW
ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY
METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: COST: £29.99 PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO:
- PUB: NINTENDO
- DEV: HAL/FLAGSHIP
- WWW.KIRBYKIRBYKIRBY.COM
- CONTACT: 01932 895390

KIRBY AND THE AMAZING MIRROR

Kirby finally takes it out of the stink and puts it in the pink

The rocket ability turns you into a rocket. You fly wherever you like, ramming stuff to nuke it. Wick!

Like an abused wife at the end of her tether, that guy down there throws a frying pan at you

Some of the England players went into Euro 2004 carrying a few pounds

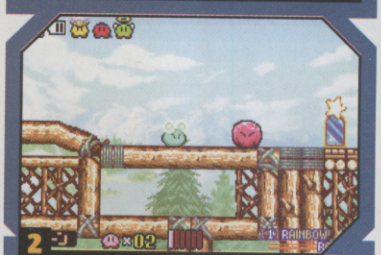
"LIKE A PORN MAG, THERE'S LOTS OF PINK AND IT'S EMBARRASSING TO BE CAUGHT ENJOYING IT"

SUCH A SUCK-UP

If you can watch Kirby in a karate bandanna doing roundhouses without a smile breaking out on your usually miserable face, you officially don't have a heart.

Every time Kirby sucks in a new personality, your brain buzzes with excitement. It's like the first time you get Mario's frog suit or cape – only 25 times over. Here are some of our faves:

■ Who does he think he is? Well, Link out of Legend Of Zelda clearly. Chop stuff with your blade of justice



■ Rock Kirby. He turns into a rock and thuds into the ground. Not actually that effective, but cool

■ Bomb maniac Kirby goes berzerk with explosives. Just make sure you don't mess yourself up

■ Did you say I looked a bit poofy? Kirby incinerates the haters with his fire breath

Chickboy Nadia off Big Brother enjoyed her baths in the garden

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Zelda: Oracle Of Ages/Seasons
- Resident Evil 0
- Onimusha Warlords
- Zelda: Link To The Past (GBA version)

HARD FACTS
- There are 9 areas
- Kirby has 25 different forms
- 40 treasures are hidden throughout the game
- The 'Cupid' ability is new for this game

DID YOU KNOW?
- Kirby was named after the famously expensive Kirby vacuum cleaner line. Because he sucks things up, obviously. Mess with Kirby and you really are Dyson with death...

Kirby's not so different from you and me. He's a flying pink blob, and instantly becomes a karate expert by popping a black belt in his mouth.

But hang on, that's not why you're similar. No, it's when Kirby gets attacked by a fruit-chucking cartoon elephant that he does what you'd do. He gets out the Nokia and calls his mates for some back-up.

That's the big twist in what is undoubtedly the finest Kirby game ever. If you're laying into a giant stone tree type thing and his boulders are cracking your bloated pink face open, you call up three other Kirbies to help you lay the smack down. Safety in numbers. They'll even hold switches down for you as well, at a push. They're good lads, but dumber than a box of hair.

SMASH BROTHER

If you can't quite believe that a Kirby game could be anything other than shit, look at the screens. The character design is hilarious. When Kirby sucks up a foe and takes on his abilities, the transformations will make you piss yourself. Whether he's swinging a sword, breathing fire or actually turning into a rocket, Amazing Mirror drowns you in charm. The awesomeness peaks when you get the Smash Bros power, which makes 2D Kirby mimic his 3D fighter self.

Kirby's 25 different forms means the gameplay stays fresh throughout, and for once in Kirby's history 'throughout' doesn't just mean a couple of hours. Amazing Mirror isn't a difficult game, but there's a lot of ground to cover to nab all of the mirror shards.

That may be a space hopper in the top left. Or we may be hallucinating again

When you're easily popped, avoid spikes. Write yourself a note that says SPIKES ARE BAD

BREAST EVER

Instead of being a straight line, the levels sprawl out Metroid style, and there are multiple routes through – as well as a bit of back-tracking. The only pink blobs to have done that before are the ones with nipples on them inside Samus Aran's spacesuit.

It's a shame that the bosses require little more thought than simply chucking back what they throw at you, and it hardly qualifies as a platformer at times when you can just fly everywhere.

But if Nintendo put out a new 2D Mario game of this quality there'd be parties in the street. Like a porn mag, there's a lot of pink in here, and it's embarrassing to be caught enjoying it. But sod it – brave the shame, and sink into the pink. ✷

The bosses are cool. Especially when you call up the boys and make them cry

Karatty Kirby gets bored of fatboy and chops him in the eye

CVG VERDICT

ALEX

GRAPHICS 90
Pretty much perfect for a GBA game. Cute, detailed and vibrantly colourful

SOUND 81
Can sound be cute? The tunes are certainly preposterously jolly

GAMEPLAY 80
Basic and easy, but nicely varied thanks to the 25 different forms for the hero

LASTING APPEAL 78
It's the biggest Kirby ever, but still dwarfed by the likes of Super Mario World or Mario 3

After the tragic Kirby Air Ride, Kirby goes from looking like a bollock to being The Dog's Bollocks. It's overly easy, but brilliant fun nonetheless.

OVERALL SCORE 83

HOW IT COMPARES
- SUPER MARIO WORLD
- KIRBY AND THE AMAZING MIRROR
- KIRBY'S AIR RIDE

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

nationalleague

XBOX | Virgin megastores | COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG | KONAMI

THE WAIT IS ALMOST OVER

The thousands of potential champions have been whittled down to just 40

Stamford Bridge, the home of Chelsea FC will be the venue for the greatest Pro Evolution Soccer showdown this country has ever seen. On August 7th, 40 of the best league players from all over the country will fight to officially become the best PES3 player in the UK. By just qualifying for the final, each player will receive an Xbox. Further prizes includes an iPod, money off vouchers and limited edition merchandise as well as the chance to represent the UK in the European Championships later this year with an all expenses paid trip to Southern Europe. Add to that numerous events around the UK as a Pro Evo Ambassador. All in all, it equates to one hell of a prize.

SCOTTISH LEAGUE
- Stuart Cronin
- Ho Yan Cheung
- Ian Wilson
- Ross Forsyth

NORTH EASTERN LEAGUE
- Tachakon Hamthanon
- Matt Holmes
- Mark Rafiee
- Jon Lee

NORTHERN LEAGUE
- Shui Ip
- Zahrin Nadzimuddin
- Stephen Minghella
- Azhan Anuar

CENTRAL LEAGUE
- Christoper Ogirri
- Jonathan Ferdenzi
- Vivek Rughani
- Jamie Cottage

MIDLANDS LEAGUE
- Richard Marsh
- Danny Loundes
- Dwaine Parkes
- Stephen Robinson

EASTERN LEAGUE
- Rich Crossman
- Nicolas Padamsee
- Tom Crossman
- Tim Samme

WELSH LEAGUE
- Jonathan Francis
- Stephen Canty
- Debo Amuda
- Joseph McMullen

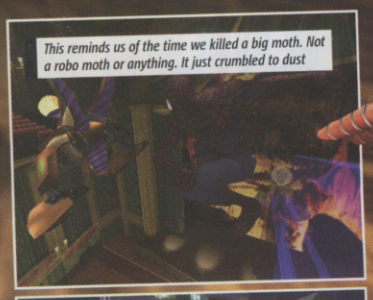
EAST LONDON LEAGUE
- Osman Idris
- Sean Oliver
- David Sefah
- Bade Ade

SOUTHERN LEAGUE
- Steve Godfrey
- Keith Wheeler
- Mike Wheeler
- Emeka Maddy

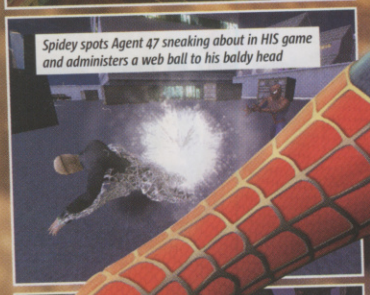
WEST LONDON LEAGUE
- Khalid El-Awel
- Femi Paul
- Zesh Sadique
- Tim Adegboye

This could have been you, so don't miss out on the PES4 National League, starting later this year. Pre-registration and details will be found on www.pesleague.co.uk in Autumn so, check back regularly!

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
9 JULY	COST: 39.99 PLAYERS: 1	PUB: ACTIVISION DEV: TREYARCH WWW.ACTIVISION.COM/MICROSITE/SPIDER-MAN CONTACT: 01753 756100



This reminds us of the time we killed a big moth. Not a robo moth or anything. It just crumbled to dust



Spidey spots Agent 47 sneaking about in HIS game and administers a web ball to his baldy head

When he got desperate, Spidey just hung upside down somewhere dark and curled one off

SPIDER-MAN 2

We've worked out who Spider-man is. Peter Parker? Nah. It's Tommy Vercetti

It's a shame the buildings don't have any individual character. They all look the same

Obviously, I'm on top of the Empire State Building. Not the pussy 'observatory' on the 86th floor, but actually RIGHT ON THE TOP. I'm Spider-Man, and I'm in New York.

Where the hell else would I be five minutes into the game? 'So that's how you swing... that's how you climb... ok, where's the biggest bastard building in town?'

The view? Astonishing. I can see Central Park, a giant green square comically bordered by massive skyscrapers. I can just about make out the Statue of Liberty out in the Hudson Bay. The cluster of skyscrapers downtown. The Chrysler Building. Actually, I could probably jump to there from here...

So you jump, and Spider-Man falls. The buildings that seemed miles away start speeding towards your face at an alarming rate, getting bigger by the second. Those cars that looked like ants suddenly look like cars. You start to panic, and yet Spidey is in an audacious swan-dive pose. You flick out a webline, and gracefully arc down to within a few feet of ground level. It's one of the most exhilarating experiences you will ever have in a videogame. It can't help but be (slightly) downhill from this point.

JOIN THE MILE-HIGH CLUB

Luckily, the thrill barely erodes. Hours into the game, and your heart will still be racing as you ping between the tops of giant buildings and take web-assisted flights throughout Manhattan. Then you'll

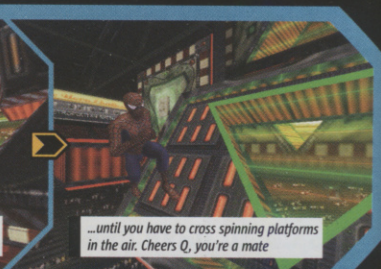
KEEP IT REAL

About halfway through the game, some monkey called Quentin Beck challenges you in Madison Square Garden (and on live TV!) to prove you're not some giant Spider-fraud. His first challenge is a piece of piss. The second is a pain in the tits.

There he is. What a nob jockey. How dare he. Mate, jetpacks are crap. Grow up

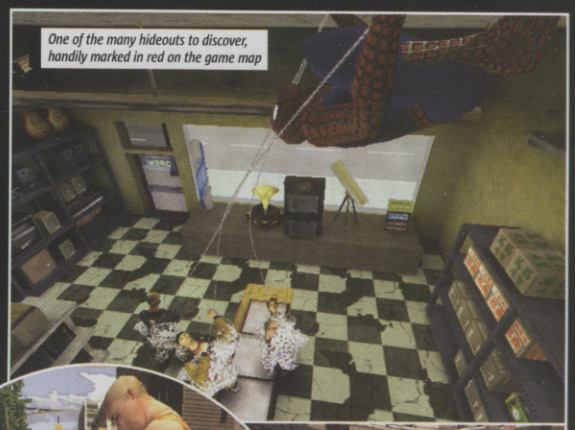
Here's Tanner, looking like he's been caning the pies since Driver 2

Challenge two: stay hidden, or Quentin Buttpipe zaps you with a laser. Easy enough...



...until you have to cross spinning platforms in the air. Cheers Q, you're a mate

When the lady asked for help removing her tampon, Spidey knew he had to be super-gentle



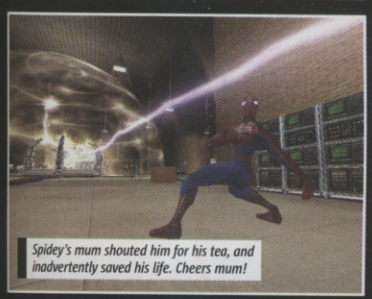
One of the many hideouts to discover, handily marked in red on the game map

Since tracksuit bottoms were outlawed, Spidey was a busy man in towns like Corby and Newport

Detail on the hoodlums isn't up to much. Kill him for being made of bad graphics

"IF YOU'RE A HARDCORE SPIDER-FAN, IT WILL GIVE YOU AN ERECTION"

The classic Dr Evil finger on chin pose whilst pulling off a fly kick. Admirable

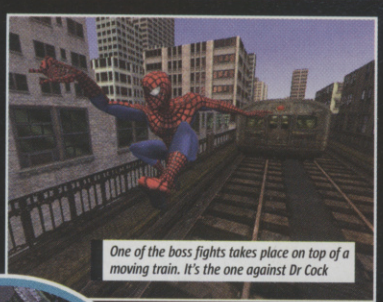


Spidey's mum shouted him for his tea, and inadvertently saved his life. Cheers mum!

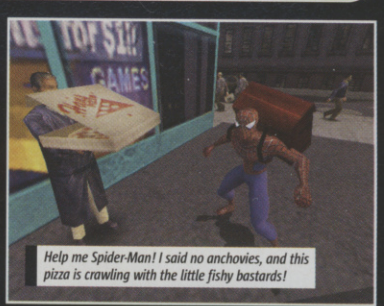
As a stunt for Superhero Jackass, Spidey swung into a telegraph pole at full speed – knackers first

find yourself stopping playing for long periods just to drop back in tourist mode. Treyarch knew this would happen, so they planted 150 skyscraper tokens for you to find. That could be the whole game, and it'd still be awesome.

But no, the whole game is basically Grand Theft Arachno, with a load of the new movie thrown in. It works like this: the chapter begins, and you suffer an absolute shocker of a cutscene. They look worse than the actual game. Peter Parker is okay, but MJ looks like a burns victim. And if Kirsten Dunst was any more wooden with the voice over, she'd take root and start dropping apples from her ass.



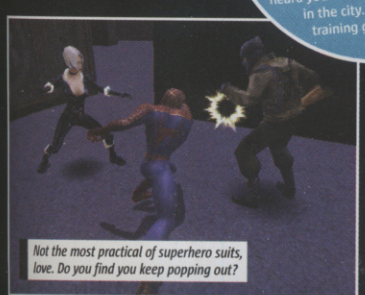
One of the boss fights takes place on top of a moving train. It's the one against Dr Cock



Help me Spider-Man! I said no anchovies, and this pizza is crawling with the little fishy bastards!

ARCADE LET DOWN

We nearly squirted web fluid when we heard you can find a four-game arcade in the city. But all it has are training games, not retro classics



Not the most practical of superhero suits, love. Do you find you keep popping out?

These snippets set up scenes from the movie that you play out. Go and get shouted at and fired by newspaper boss JJ. Go and meet love interest Mary-Jane for a movie. That sort of thing. You nail the 'movie' task, and move onto tasks that earn you hero points – helping out the idiots of New York City.

'Spider-Man, somebody just jacked that car!' 'Spider-Man, they're robbing the security van!' 'Spider-man, that bloke is going to fall off that building!' 'Spider-man, somebody just jacked that car *and* robbed the security van.'

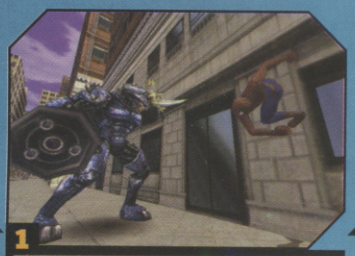
Unfortunately, the same tasks crop up all too regularly. As you get 'jumped' in a trap for the tenth time, you start to wonder why Treyarch couldn't think of other things for Spidey to be doing.

The first time you chase a lost balloon for someone, it seems a ludicrous waste of your superhero time. Same with carrying people to hospital who only appear to have a broken leg. The nurses thank you for getting him there 'just in time', as if a sore knee magically turns into brain cancer if you leave it more than two minutes. Sod it though, getting around is so much fun you wouldn't even mind if they asked you to deliver pizza. And they do that as well.

Chasing cars is hard though. Swinging through the air chasing them is brilliant fun, but the real skill is landing Spidey on top of the speeding motor. Many times you'll jump, clear the car, smack into the road then get smashed down the road by a bloody taxi. You lose your spider- »

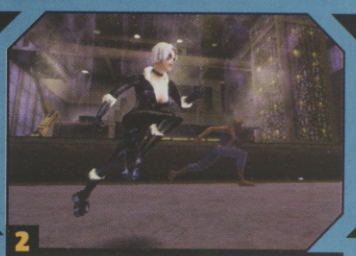
INTRODUCE YOURSELF

In between showing these guys the true meaning of pain, we indulged the newsman in Spidey to give each of them a little interview on the streets of the Big Apple. And here's what they told us:



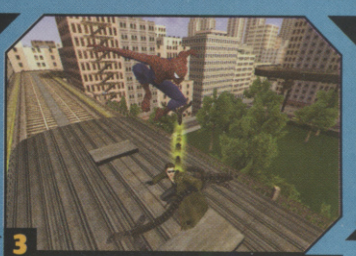
1

■ *"Yo. I'm Rhino. I'm thick as dirt. You don't even need to kick me in or anything. Just keep dodging, and I'll basically mess MYSELF up. When people call me 'retard', that's praise"*



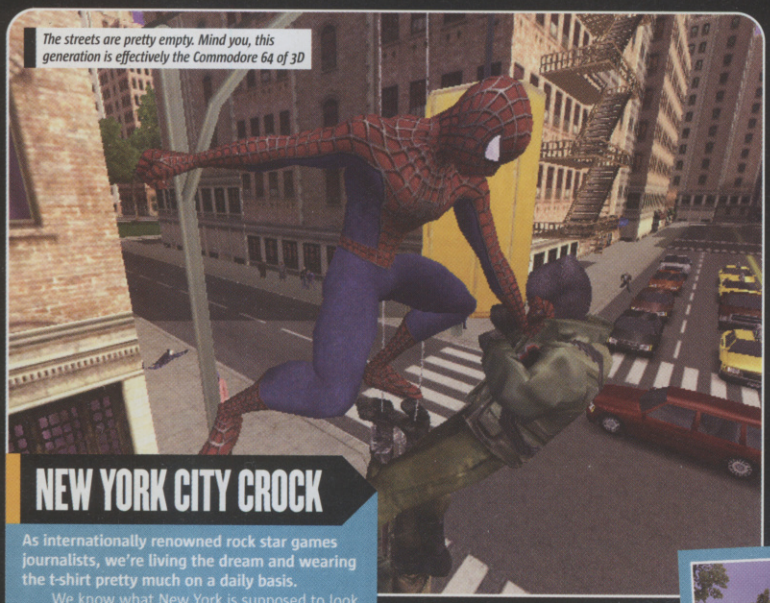
2

■ *"Hi there. I'm Black Cat. You're probably looking at my tiddies. I had this suit made specially so you'd look at my tiddies. I leave a trail when I'm swinging through the air – I should douche"*



3

■ *"Hey Spidey. Remember when I invited you over to my lab? And I was doing WEIRD EXPERIMENTS and stuff? Wasn't it OBVIOUS I was the next Green Goblin waiting to happen? You div"*

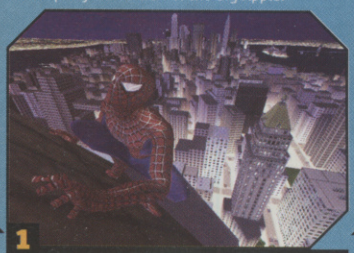

The streets are pretty empty. Mind you, this generation is effectively the Commodore 64 of 3D

The real Times Square used to be teeming with hookers and muggers. But they cleaned it up

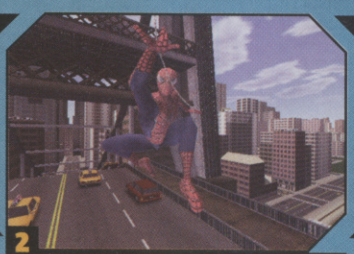
NEW YORK CITY CROCK

As internationally renowned rock star games journalists, we're living the dream and wearing the t-shirt pretty much on a daily basis.

We know what New York is supposed to look like, because we've seen it with our own eyes on one of our regular party visits to the city that never sleeps. Here are some highs and slows from Spidey 2's version of the Big Apple.


1

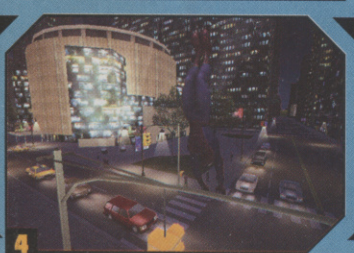
■ The view from the top of the Empire State. HOLY SHIT! That green square's Central Park


2

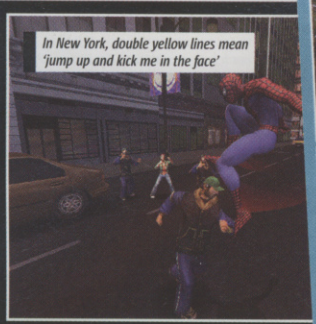
■ That's the Brooklyn Bridge. The game one isn't as impressive as the real one

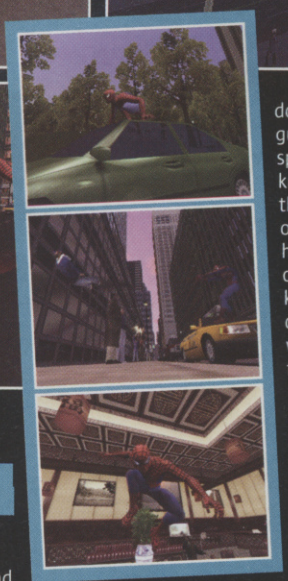
3

■ The Statue of Liberty. Come on! It's the second place you'll go after the Empire State


4

■ Madison Square Garden, home of the New York Knicks, and a whole bunch of wino bums, in reality


In New York, double yellow lines mean 'jump up and kick me in the face'



sense of humour pretty quickly when that happens.

WHERE'S THE LOVE, PEOPLE?

We also don't get how blasé the people are when Spidey whizzes past. They don't bat an eyelid, and some of them even cuss him for not having a job. We'd be all like, "HOLY SHIT, DUDE! SPIDER-MAN!" and waving our arms around like a maniac. You can be doing super-awesome superhero crap like hanging over the Brooklyn Bridge with a webline in each hand, and nobody applauds or anything. If you're a hardcore Spider-fan, it WILL give you an erection.

Maybe all the game's superhero appreciators are inside their houses where Spidey can't get to them. The real New York is jammed solid with human scum constantly, but these streets are only about as populated as Liberty City. At street level, you could be anywhere with big buildings really. Like in True Crime, shop fronts and buildings are pretty indistinct. That doesn't stop it looking great though, especially at night.

Swinging aside, a big part of Spidey's life is punching people's heads in. You need some pretty fruity kung-fu skills to take down eight blokes with guns and giant spanners. You already know Spider-Man has these skills, but a few of these moves will have you grinning all over your face. The key to success is combining web fluid with well-placed kicks to the chops.

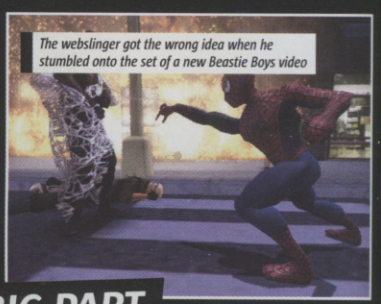
Bind a bad guy up in goo, then boot him 10 foot into the air. Disarm another with a squirt of web, then yank him towards your outstretched fist. If you've got the room, web someone up then swing him around over your head, smacking his buddies over like bowling pins. Try not to crack up while you pull that one off.

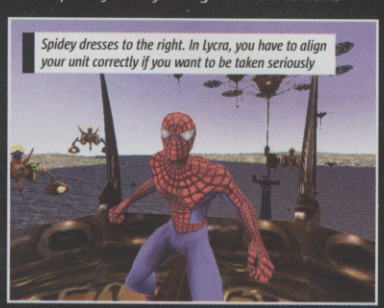
If you were wondering how they were going to work The Ultimate Gaming Cliché into all this, the answer is Spider Reflexes. You can flip into – urgh – bullet time during a ruck to make yourself harder to hit and even more flamboyant with your shoeings. It's effective, but slows things down. And you only get a finite amount of this power.

Take a wild guess how you recharge it? Go on, guess how the makers of Tony Hawk's want you to fill up a special meter? That's right, by throwing tricks into the mix as you glide through the air. Activision can't help themselves, can they? It's fun to run along the side of a building though, before firing yourself off onto a flagpole. You somersault off that, swing some more, and you're ready to rumble again.

STEALTH SNEAKS AWAY

Spider-Man 2's most amazing trick is making you feel like Spidey. But the PSone


The webslinger got the wrong idea when he stumbled onto the set of a new Beastie Boys video


Spidey dresses to the right. In Lycra, you have to align your unit correctly if you want to be taken seriously

"SWINGING ASIDE, A BIG PART OF SPIDEY'S LIFE IS PUNCHING PEOPLE'S HEADS IN"

There were no horse chestnut trees in Central Park, so Spidey invented Human Conkers

■ Weirdly enough, the crims don't just give up as soon as you swing into view. They fancy their chances of kicking your ass.

WHEN SPIDERS ATTACK

AS IF. Because random nameless petty thieves always kill the big-name superhero, don't they? Know your place, assholes.

You spend hero points to upgrade how you kick ass. Here, Spidey tries out his new upwards throat kick

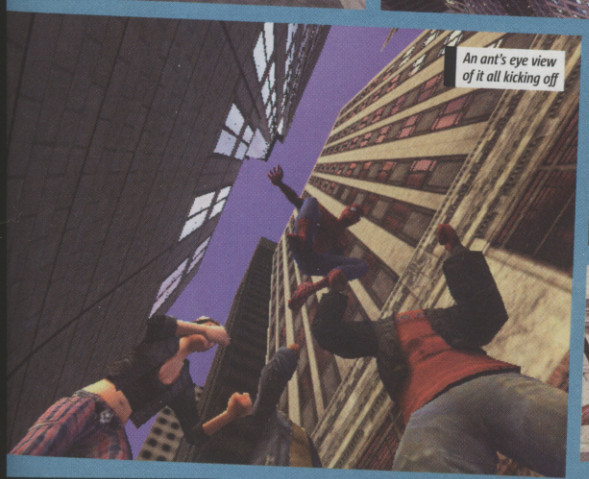
Web 'em up and twirl 'em round. Hilarious, and the game records how long you can swing 'em

A career in adult entertainment awaits as Spidey hits three targets with one squirt

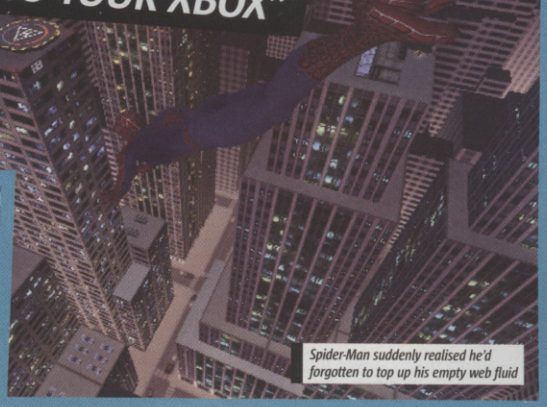
The ultimate humiliation. String up a pack of bad guys on a lamppost for the cops to pick up

"THE STORY IS JUST AN EXCUSE TO GET THIS BRILLIANT NEW DIGITAL PLAYGROUND INTO YOUR XBOX"

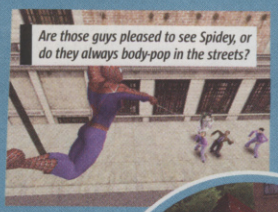
Where do people get spanners that big? And what the hell do they use them for?



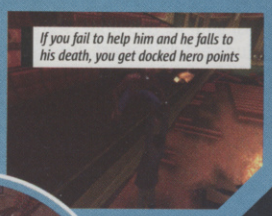
An ant's eye view of it all kicking off



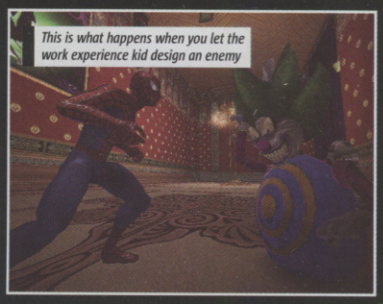
Spider-Man suddenly realised he'd forgotten to top up his empty web fluid



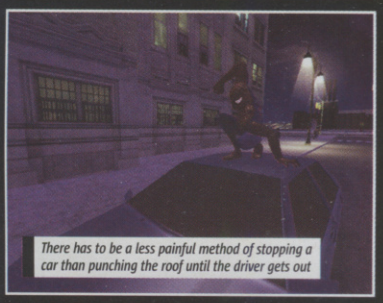
Are those guys pleased to see Spidey, or do they always body-pop in the streets?



If you fail to help him and he falls to his death, you get docked hero points



This is what happens when you let the work experience kid design an enemy



There has to be a less painful method of stopping a car than punching the roof until the driver gets out

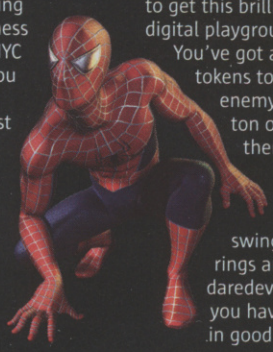
games managed this too in ways that this movie game misses. In their clamour to make a GTA-style adventure, Treyarch forgot the Metal Gear Spider bits. Where you crawl into enemy bases on ceilings, damn near pissing yourself with excitement, waiting for the right moment to strike. We miss that.

Treyarch is counting on you wanting to mess around high above NYC for long periods. If you were some kind of robot that could resist all this free-roaming fun, you could blast through the whole story in a day. You'll be pleased that bosses like Rhino show up despite not being in the film, but these encounters lack the sparkle of previous Spidey games. When you're done though, you're nowhere near done. Actually, the story is just an excuse to get this brilliant new digital playground into your Xbox.

You've got all the skyscraper tokens to grab, nearly 40 enemy hideouts to bust, a ton of secrets, and then there're the races.

Grab a blue star, and you can test just how tasty your swinging is. A series of rings are placed in a daredevil aerial circuit, and you have to hammer round in good time. It's a technique that stands you in good stead when you have to chase Black Cat across the skyline in one of the story's most thrilling set pieces.

In the end though, you can't have seriously expected a game based on a film to overthrow the greatest piece of code to grace a DVD. The open-ended design hints at GTA III without really having the inspiration to see it through. Like GTA though, the real greatness is that you can occupy yourself for hours at a time not really doing anything useful. If you can think of a superhero game from this generation that's better than this, well, you're hallucinating: Super Titty Warriors isn't a real game. ✷



PIZZA EXPRESS

IN NYC, the cheeky twats want the moon on a stick. Arrive even one second late when delivering a pizza and it's a permanent black mark on your record

PREVIOUS GAMES

- Kelly Slater's Pro Surfer
- Minority Report
- Spider-Man: The Movie
- Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2

HARD FACTS

- There are 16 chapters that make up the story
- 150 skyscraper tokens
- 37 enemy hideouts
- 75 secret tokens
- 150 challenges to complete and a further 150 MEGA challenges

DID YOU KNOW?

- The game keeps a tally on EVERYTHING in the status screens. Your longest drop, how many pedestrians you've bumped into, even how many gallons of web fluid you've used

CVG 2ND OPINION

GRAEME

See I reckoned the last Spidey game was a pile of stinking man goo. But Treyarch's flashy follow-up is the first time in the series' history that you truly feel like the Sultan of Sticky Stuff. Alex is on the money with the whole Grand Theft Arachno thing. There's so much freedom and the scale's absolutely huge. Plus all the mini side missions are wick.

CVG VERDICT

ALEX

GRAPHICS 79
Spidey is merely okay, detail is sometimes lacking, but it's smooth and quick throughout

SOUND 72
No in-game music, but nice ambient noises. SHOCKING voice-overs, however

GAMEPLAY 90
The swinging mechanic is magnificent, and the controls effectively make YOU Spidey

LASTING APPEAL 88
The main story is 10 hours tops, but there's a massive amount to discover

The Spider-Man fan's dirtiest-ever wet dream. You're Spidey, there's New York, go nuts. Inspiration is sparce at times, but the swinging is awesome

OVERALL SCORE 84

HOW IT COMPARES
GTA: VICE CITY
SPIDER-MAN 2
TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA

"MY NUTS ARE TINGLING"

When it's all said and done, being a Spider-Man would be pretty weak if it wasn't for the special abilities that come with the territory.

Imagine wearing that gay jumpsuit all day, and having to be on best behaviour all the time – and not slipping it into Kirsten Dunst even though she's clearly DYING for it, you know. So let's recall the things that must make being Spidey cool.

■ Ah, Spider sense. So you can pre-empt danger, or know when the bird across the road is getting undressed

■ If you tried to run along a wall, gravity would laugh in your stupid face. Not Spidey

■ If you could shoot webs out of your hands, you'd swing on a helicopter as well

RELEASE DATE
30 JULY (GC)
8 AUGUST (PS2, XB, PC)

GAME INFO
COST: £39.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: EA
- DEV: EA
- WWW.UK.EA.COM
- CONTACT: 08702 432435

CATWOMAN

EA gets its pussy out but we'll be leaving it in the litter tray, ta

We've done enough pussy jokes – insert your own one here

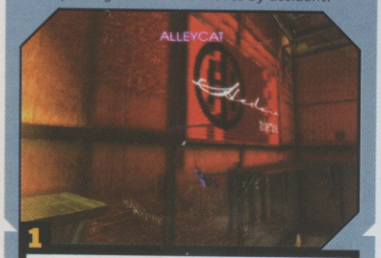
Why's there no 'SCREEEEEE' noise when Catwoman scratches a wall?

Some of Catwoman's acrobatics look spectacular, but it never feels as cool as Spider-Man 2

PURR FOR ME

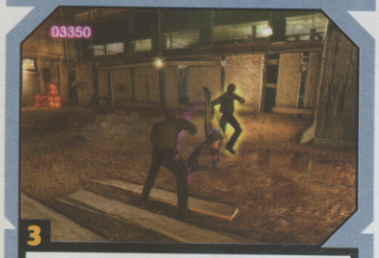
Catwoman's moves are divided into four main categories, each reflecting a different side of her superhero abilities.

There are targets to reach on each level for these moves. Hit them and you get extra points to unlock stuff. It sounds interesting, but it's actually a very straight-forward system and you'll end up doing most of the moves by accident.

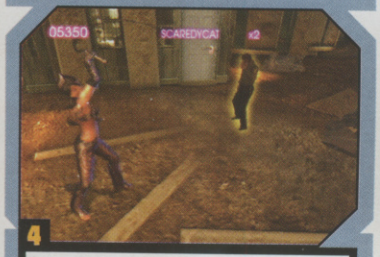


1 ■ Alley Cat moves are all your acrobatic gubbins like wall leaps and lamp post swings

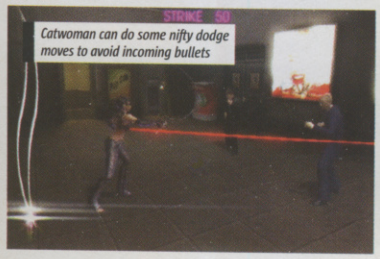
2 ■ Wild Cat moves involve kicking arse, preferably in as stylish a manner as possible



3 ■ Scaredy Cat moves kick in when you've made your enemies wet themselves in fear



4 ■ Pussy Cat moves are taunts and poses you can use to distract and humiliate enemies



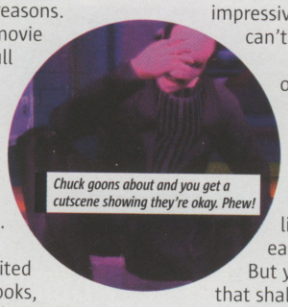
Catwoman can do some nifty dodge moves to avoid incoming bullets

Cats are rubbish. They're too clever, they're evil little buggers who'll purr at you one minute then lacerate an artery the next, they lick their own arses, and they keep crapping in my garden.

And that stuff about them always landing on their feet, even if they've fallen from a multi-storey tower block? Bollocks. Show me. In fact, I'll chuck the little garden-soiling git over the edge.

Of course, this understandable cat prejudice didn't affect our approach to Catwoman for a couple of reasons. First, it's an EA-developed movie license released with the full blessing of the legendary DC Comics, in whose pages Catwoman first appeared. Second, the delectable Halle Berry is playing Catwoman, wearing a sliver of skintight black PVC. This is a good thing.

It's a bit sad getting excited about a game character's looks, but goddamn she's fine. Light shimmers over every smooth curve, sparks flash in those sexy eyes, and every graceful movement is filthy slice of feline foreplay.



Chuck goons about and you get a cutscene showing they're okay. Phew!

SHOW US YOUR PUSSY

She's fit, but my gosh, don't she just know it. Take your hands off the joypad and Catwoman starts working it for the camera – and your dirty, lecherous eyes. It's a strange experience finding a game character so, um, arousing, but the motion capture and visual detail is so impressive that we can't help it.

If you're one of our female readers you're probably sighing gently and tutting like a teacher at our weak, easily-pleased man-brains. But you know what? We're not that shallow. We demand depth, intelligence and personality from our sexy game characters. Otherwise we'll just have a couple of goes, then kick their scanty arses to the kerb.

Playing with Catwoman is by no means a fumbled one-night stand, but we won't be taking her home to meet our mums either. Yeah, she LOOKS amazing, but doesn't have anywhere near enough variety to keep us interested in the long-term.

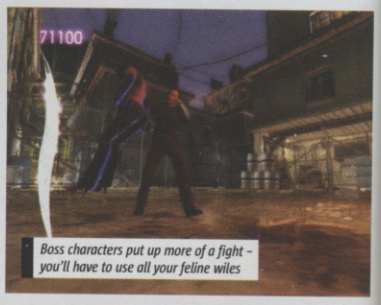
One big problem is that Catwoman's superhero skills haven't been captured very well. Piss-spraying and garden-crapping aren't much use when fighting crime, so EA has sensibly concentrated on agility and fighting.

LOOK BEFORE YOU LEAP

At first the agility stuff feels quite nice, with presses of the shoulder buttons pulling off nifty wall scrambles, lithe leaps and acrobatic vaults that you can link together. Quickly, though, it begins to feel stale. The levels are very linear so there's usually only one route to take, with barriers placed to stop you feline free-styling. The moves themselves feel very robotic once you've done them a few times, and there's none of Prince Of Persia's gymnastic freedom.

"IT'S A BIT SAD GETTING EXCITED ABOUT A GAME CHARACTER'S LOOKS, BUT GODDAMN SHE'S FINE"

It's actually amazing how good the Catwoman character looks compared to the rest of the game



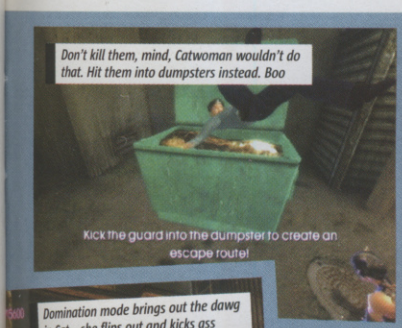
Boss characters put up more of a fight – you'll have to use all your feline wiles

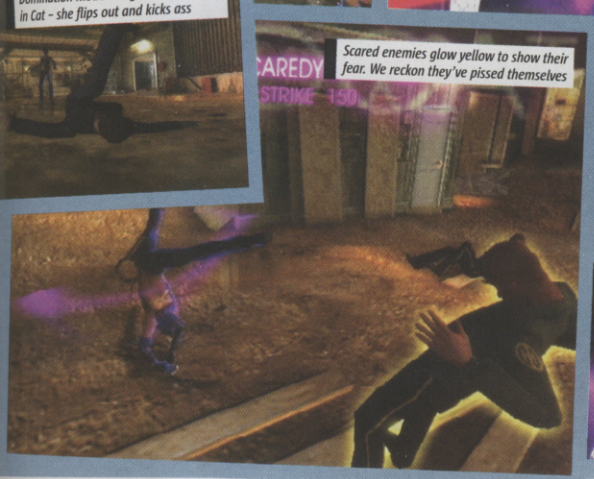
The level design's basic but the glowing light effects rule

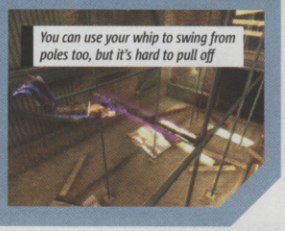
■ Don't feel bad about perving over Catwoman. She wants you to. Seriously, she told us she fancied you. Don't touch

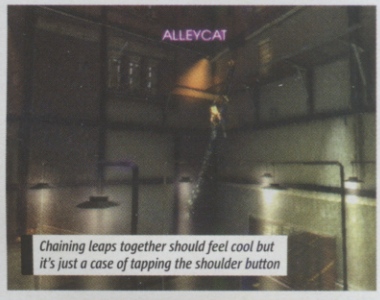
EYE CAT-CHING

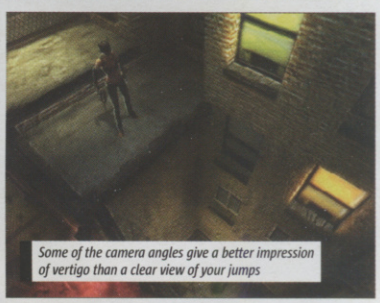
the controller and the game shifts into what EA calls 'Ogle Cam', with the Kitty Cat winking, stroking and purring as you watch.











PREVIOUS GAMES

- Harry Potter And The Philosopher's Stone
- Harry Potter And The Chamber of Secrets
- Harry Potter And The Prisoner of Azkaban

HARD FACTS

- Number of levels: 7
- Number of feline fighting moves: 15
- Unlockable artworks: 45
- Number of cat craps, per week, in Graeme's garden: 4
- Number of pussy jokes in this review: at least 9

DID YOU KNOW?

- Halle Berry got $500,000 extra to get her baps out for thirty seconds in 2001's Swordfish (that's $17,000 a second!). We saw it and it was GOOD.

The camera doesn't help. It's fixed and changes angles depending on your position like Onimusha 3. But since Catwoman demands precise acrobatics, not being able to manipulate it is a right pain. Misjudge a jump and you'll plunge to the bottom of the level and have to climb up again. Which is no fun at all.

You can always go into Cat Sense mode, a first-person view of the area that highlights useful objects and escape routes with a cool glowing effect, but it's no substitute for not having a decent, controllable external camera in the first place.

PLAYING WITH YOUR PUSSY

Find the wee hidden hatch in each level and Midnight, your feline friend, will award you nine lives. And you get to see Halle stroke her pussy. Lovely.

KITTY FIGHTS

Luckily, the camera doesn't effect combat too badly. The right analog stick is used to lash out attacks in any direction. It feels fluid enough and there's loads of cool moves to unlock like using enemies as human shields and whipping weapons clean out of their paws.

But you won't believe the real problem: DC Comics, bless 'em, outlawed any depictions of Catwoman actually KILLING anyone, so instead you've got to wallop goons into dumpsters or wail at them until they freak out. Which means fighting is a weirdly passive experience, like you're not even hurting anyone. We were bored quick.

Since the game's just a procession of wall-climbing sections and repetitive fight scenes there was little to keep us going. Like we said, Catwoman looks tasty enough to satisfy your pussy lust in the short term, but let's face it: no matter how gorgeous the cat is, sooner or later it's going to crap in your garden. ✷

GETTIN' THE CLAWS OUT

Have you ever heard cats scrapping? They must have some moves, 'cos they make on hell of a screechy racket.

Catwoman's obviously been studying the art of cat fighting since she's loaded to the whiskers with killer moves. You can unlock more as you play through the levels, which helps keep things a wee bit fresher. She doesn't scream like a banshee, though.

■ She's got some nifty moves, Catwoman, like this whip-a-goon's-neck trick

■ She'll pull him in close and use him as a shield, moving him into position for the next move...

■ ...launching him at his mate to take the two of them out at once! Mee-OUCH!

CVG 2ND OPINION

See that Halle Berry? Minger. No, honest, she doesn't do it for me, so all that stuff Graeme's spunking on about doesn't make up for the stale level design, sticky acrobatic controls and daft fighting. The analog stuff works really well but not being able to kill people is just rubbish, even if it keeps DC Comics happy. Just another dodgy movie licence, I'm afraid.

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 82
Environments and enemies are dull, but the lighting's cool and Catwoman looks stunning

SOUND — 73
Bog-standard cinematic music, some crap voice acting and repetitive fighting yelps

GAMEPLAY — 64
Promises to be cool but quickly becomes repetitive – and the fighting's daft

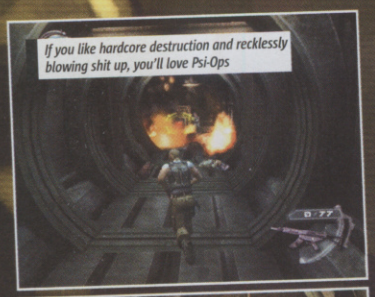
LASTING APPEAL — 56
Once you've overdosed on Catwoman's sex-kitten looks, you'll soon get bored

Nice enough to look at but there's little underneath the gloss, sheen, tits, and ass. Fun in the short term, but you'll have had your fill of pussy real quick.

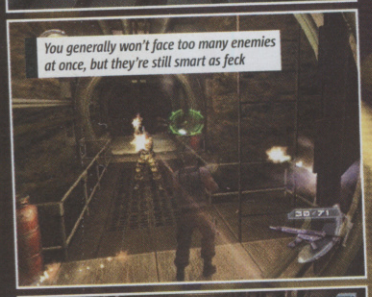
OVERALL SCORE ✷ **62**

HOW IT COMPARES
PRINCE OF PERSIA
CATWOMAN
ONIMUSHA 3

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
17 SEP	COST: 39.99 PLAYERS: 1	PUB: MIDWAY DEV: MIDWAY WWW.PSIOPSGAME.COM CONTACT: 020 7382 7720



If you like hardcore destruction and recklessly blowing shit up, you'll love Psi-Ops



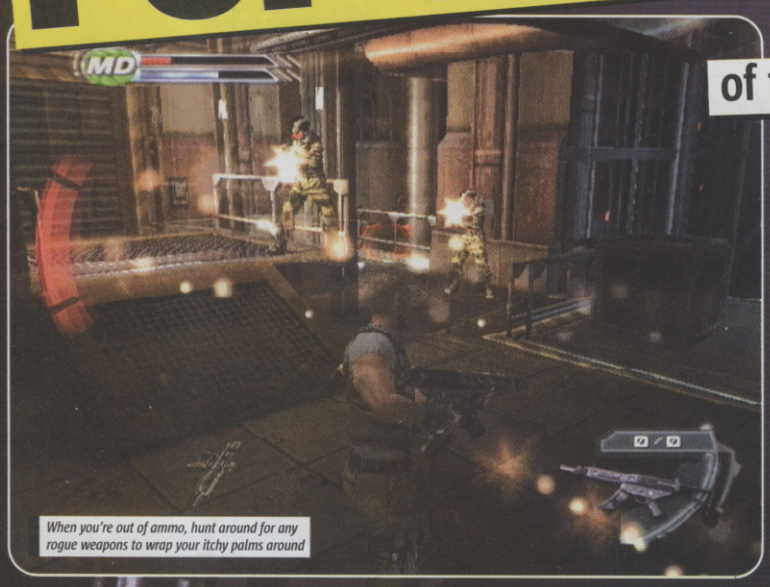
You generally won't face too many enemies at once, but they're still smart as feck

The auto-lock aim is too awkward in frantic face-offs, but is more manageable one-on-one

CVG SILVER AWARD

PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

The most original shooter of the year, or is it all in our minds?



When you're out of ammo, hunt around for any rogue weapons to wrap your itchy palms around

The last time any kind of movement threatened to cause havoc to civilised society in the CVG office was when Mike evacuated a Vindaloo fallout of nuclear proportions and left the window open. Thankfully, in that instance, it didn't leap out the toilet bowl and start controlling people with its freaky psychic powers. Which brings us nicely to the Movement in Psi-Ops.

Yup, it's mysterious shadowy organisation time again. This one's a shady terrorist faction, intent on swelling its forces to massive proportions by capturing enemy armies and telepathically brainwashing them – turning them into mindless legions of destructive Meat Puppets. Mission? To take over the world!

POWER OF THE MINDGATE

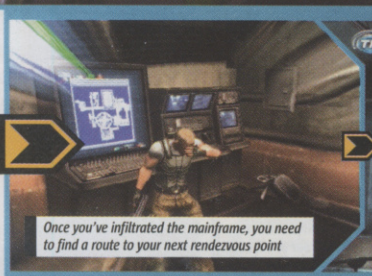
You see, in the world of Psi-Ops, the mind is as powerful and deadly as any weapon – unfortunately for civilisation as we know it though, the leader of the Movement ain't gonna be using his Psionic skills for good. All's not lost however – it turns out the US military has its own secret Psionics division, known as Mindgate.

That's where you come in as Nick Scryer, Psi-Op extraordinaire. Your brain's been wiped allowing you and your crack team of cranial killers to infiltrate the Movement's base undetected. As the game begins, you've no memory of your past, no abilities and nothing but a pistol and

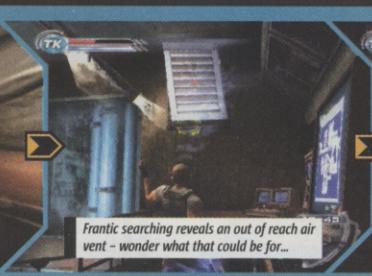
■ We hate crate puzzles. Ever since games entered the third dimension, we've shoved more boxes round the place than a

STACKS O' FUN

hyperactive shoe shop sales assistant. Thankfully, in Psi-Ops at least Scryer's Telekinesis slaps a refreshing slant on things...

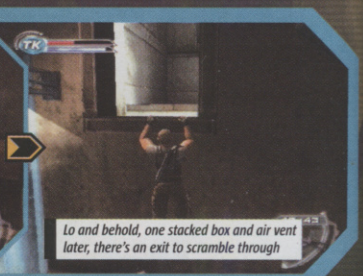


Once you've infiltrated the mainframe, you need to find a route to your next rendezvous point



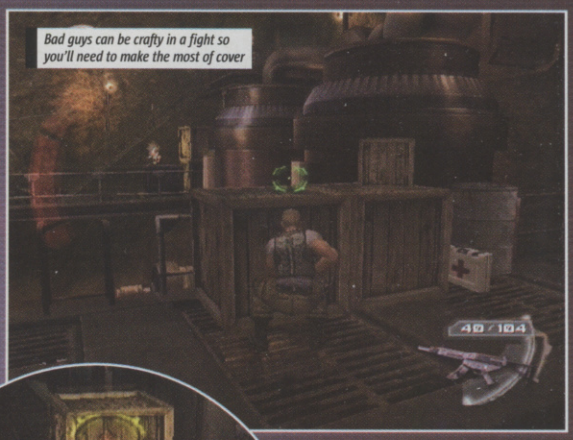
Frantic searching reveals an out of reach air vent – wonder what that could be for...

Yank off the cover then shift one of the crates conveniently strewn around the room



Lo and behold, one stacked box and air vent later, there's an exit to scramble through

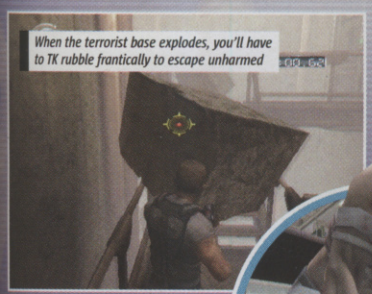
Run out of ammo? Smack the alarm to call in additional enemies to pilfer off



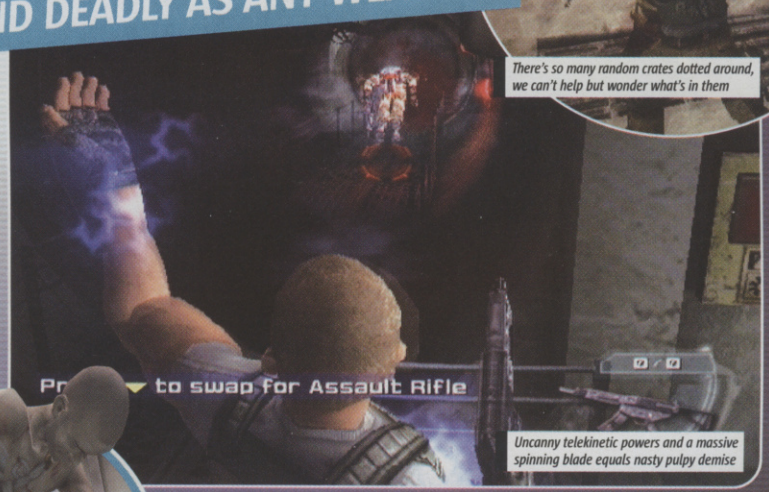
Bad guys can be crafty in a fight so you'll need to make the most of cover

"IN THE WORLD OF PSI-OPS, THE MIND IS AS POWERFUL AND DEADLY AS ANY WEAPON"

Although the pathway through the levels is extremely linear, there are tons of secret bits to explore



When the terrorist base explodes, you'll have to TK rubble frantically to escape unharmed



Uncanny telekinetic powers and a massive spinning blade equals nasty pulpy demise

There's so many random crates dotted around, we can't help but wonder what's in them

orders from a breasty double agent, working undercover, to escape.

The first ten minutes of Psi-Ops is a fairly bewildering experience – you'll be running through murky corridors in traditional third-person shooter style, grappling with the unconventional control layout and generally getting your ass kicked by the ferocious enemy AI.

The confusion lies in the way the game sets itself up as a stealther by giving you all the familiar tools for sneakery up front – such as wall-hugging and crouching – and then chucking enough razor-sharp bad guys in your direction to make subterfuge a near impossibility. You'll need to whip out your weapons and dish out some major gunishment to make any progress.

SECOND PSI

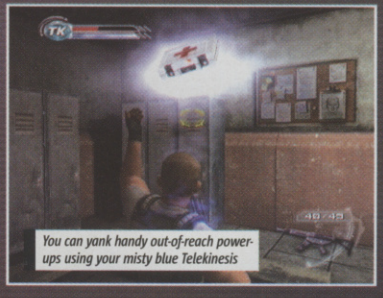
Although the upcoming Second Sight has similar mind-bending mechanics to this, it's looking more open-ended and strategic than Psi-Ops.

This is the first glimpse you'll get of the amazing physics though, as bodies blast backwards on a stream of bullets or tossed in the air by exploding barrels – it all looks awesome, but you ain't seen nothing yet.

All this stuff's just Psi-Ops' way of setting you up for the first of its many refreshingly original surprises. Once you rendezvous with Special Agent Big Knockers elsewhere in the base, you'll get your first taste of Psionics – initially you'll relearn Telekinesis, but it's quickly backed up with Pyrokinesis, Remote Viewing, Mind Control, Mind Drain and Aura View.

LEARNING ON THE JOB

Whenever you remember abilities, the action immediately flashes back to your training days in the Mindgate facility. You'll be taught the ins and outs of each trick through a series of painless and invaluable missions, ensuring that you'll be primed and ready for action by the time the game returns you to the present. It's all brilliantly woven into the storyline and manages to be comprehensive without wrecking the pace. »



You can yank handy out-of-reach power-ups using your misty blue Telekinesis

PSI-KING YOU OUT

Like the rest of the game, Psi-Ops' massive boss fights are an imaginative notch above most of the mundane end-of-level encounters banging around these days.

The Psi Masters you'll knock noggins with might look puny, but they take a combination of flurrying fast fingers and copious cranial cunning to bring to their knees.

1

■ First up, hordes of screaming Meat Puppets run at you in a pant-creaming ball of fire

2

■ Use telekinesis to throw the human time-bombs into the machinery, stemming the foe flow

3

■ Once the brain-dead masses are toast, you'll go head-to-head with the big man himself

4

■ Grab a crate – yup, another one – and bludgeon the sucker's brains out

DON'T D.I.Y.

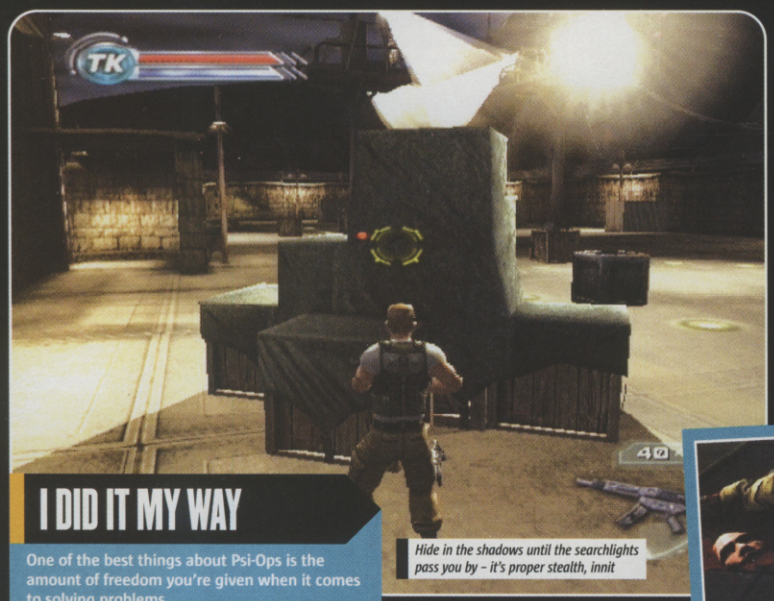
Sometimes you've got to get someone to do your dirty work for you. Thankfully, in Psi-Ops, it's a piece of cake using the Mind Control ability.

In fact, sometimes it's vital to get control over some goon to sort out some puzzle or other. Simply select an enemy and stuff yourself into their brain – once you're calling the shots you can shuffle them about and perform tasks you can't do on your own.

■ You need to get this ladder down to proceed – trouble is, the button to do it's at the top

■ Find a nearby enemy, like this guy loitering on the roof, and hit him with Mind Control

■ Get him to lower the ladder then make him chuck himself off the roof for good measure



Hide in the shadows until the searchlights pass you by – it's proper stealth, innit

We're easily distracted by moving shiny stuff like these spinny wall things. Oooh purdy...

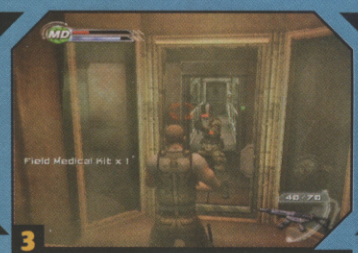
I DID IT MY WAY

One of the best things about Psi-Ops is the amount of freedom you're given when it comes to solving problems.

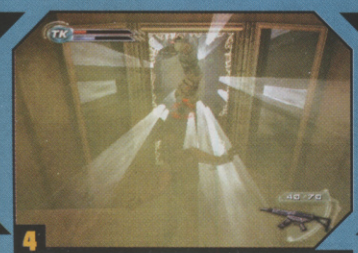
Often you'll have a choice between brutal force, stealth or some sneaky Psi-ing – we'll take anything that guarantees maximum head-pulping carnage any day.

1 ■ This gnome-headed crony's sporting a key card on his person, so head in and nab it

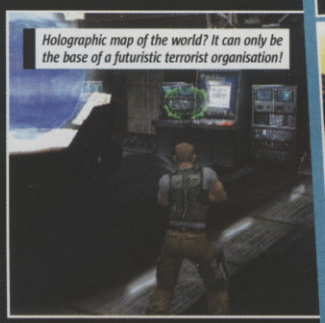
2 ■ Ack! Nothing's that simple – the door slams shut and deadly gas slowly fills the room



3 ■ You'll need to find a way out before you croak it – maybe shoot out the glass?



4 ■ Nah, repeatedly smashing through using this guy's skull is more to our taste...

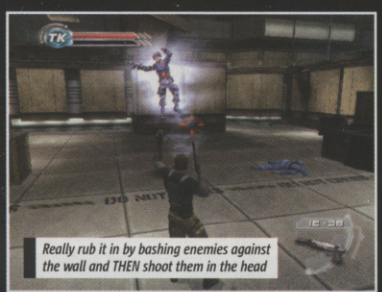


Holographic map of the world? It can only be the base of a futuristic terrorist organisation!

Whatever Psionic skill you're using, you'll spot your Psi energy gauge depleting as you flex your lethal mind muscle. It's vital you keep this full if you want to get one up on the relentless droves of devious foes intent on shredding your carcass, colander-style. Thankfully, alongside the vials of energy left haphazardly around the eight massive levels, you'll quickly be reacquainted with your Mind Drain ability. Hit R2 close to a dead body and you'll suck the remaining juice from the torso – it won't be much though.

For a more sizeable shot, you'll need to drain your victims while they're still alive. Sneak up behind them, making sure you're not spotted, then hit Mind Drain for a meatier dose of the mental juices. You'll know you're done when the poor sap you've molested suddenly loses his head in a shower of blood and high-speed brain matter. Cool!

Each Psi ability has its own unique, and impressively intuitive, method of control. Once you start to get your brain tricks back, the initially peculiar basic set-up starts to make sense, with all your Psionic stuff slotting transparently around it. The left and right analogue sticks are used for movement and camera respectively, while the standard buttons are reserved for melee combat, crouching, jumping and object interaction, as well as auto-targeting by positioning your reticule over an enemy and holding Triangle. Squeeze R1 to pop a few caps in enemy heads, and hit the directional pad to swap between your other Psi moves.



Really rub it in by bashing enemies against the wall and THEN shoot them in the head

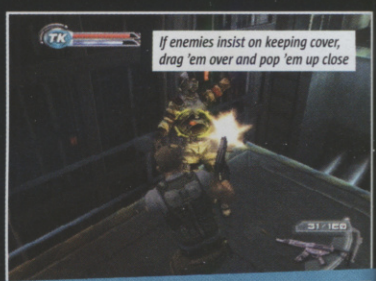
THINK YOU'RE TOUGH ENOUGH?

L1 is set aside for your Telekinesis which is probably the handiest, most versatile tool at your disposal. By positioning your reticule over almost any freestanding object and squeezing the trigger, you can lock on and lift the damn thing. The harder you push the button, the higher the object will rise – simply wiggle the right analogue stick to shunt it around the area until you're happy.

Not only is this great for moving crates to reach ledges, you can also yank enemies off the ground, giving you a whole new offensive manoeuvre when you're out of ammo. Pick guards up and smash them against walls until you've successfully shattered every bone in their body, or lob them over railings and into chasms – wheeee! You can even pick up explosive barrels and chuck them at the bad guys to make fiery fritters from your foes.

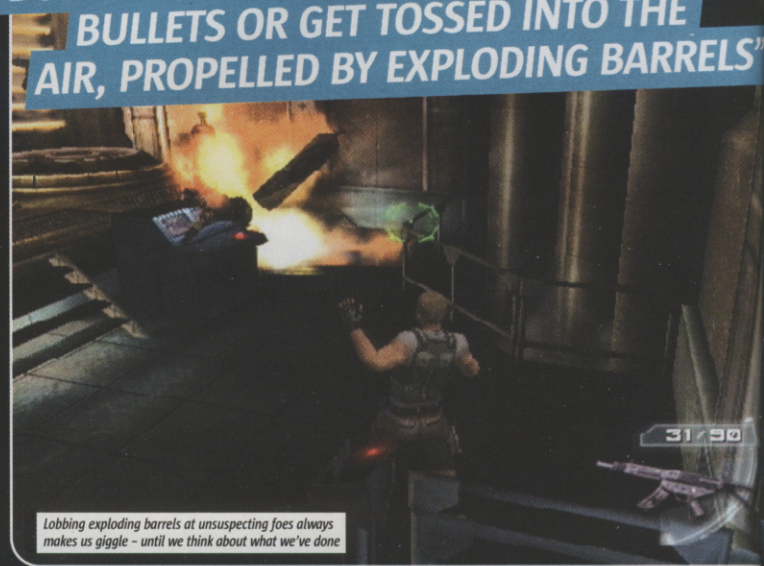
OPEN FOR BUSINESS

It's this open-ended structure to puzzle-solving and overcoming obstacles that makes Psi-Ops such a joy to tackle. While the levels themselves remain strictly linear – ensuring its tightly scripted tale remains grippingly focused – individual objectives can be achieved in a variety of ways.



If enemies insist on keeping cover, drag 'em over and pop 'em up close

"BODIES FLY BACKWARDS ON A STREAM OF BULLETS OR GET TOSSED INTO THE AIR, PROPELLED BY EXPLODING BARRELS"

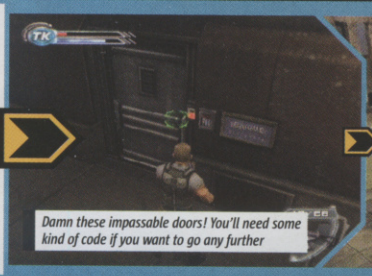


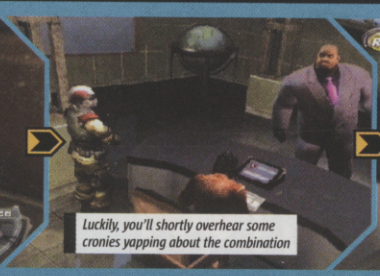
Lobbing exploding barrels at unsuspecting foes always makes us giggle – until we think about what we've done

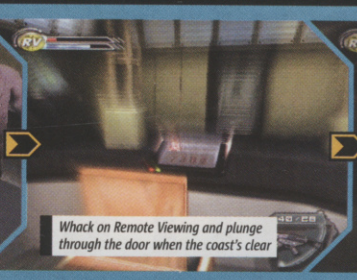
REMOTE CONTROL

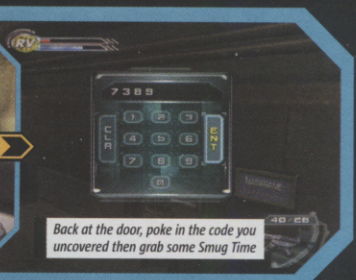
Remote Viewing provides some trippy moments in the game, thanks to its nausea-inducing motion blur.

When you're done barfing, you'll find it's invaluable for spying on guards in the next room, or even solving some of Psi-Ops' puzzles.

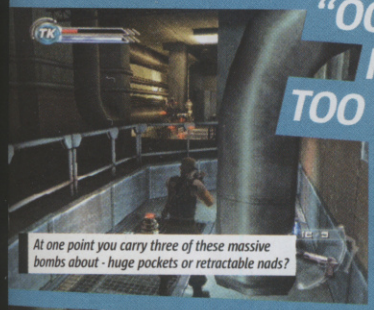

Damn these impassable doors! You'll need some kind of code if you want to go any further

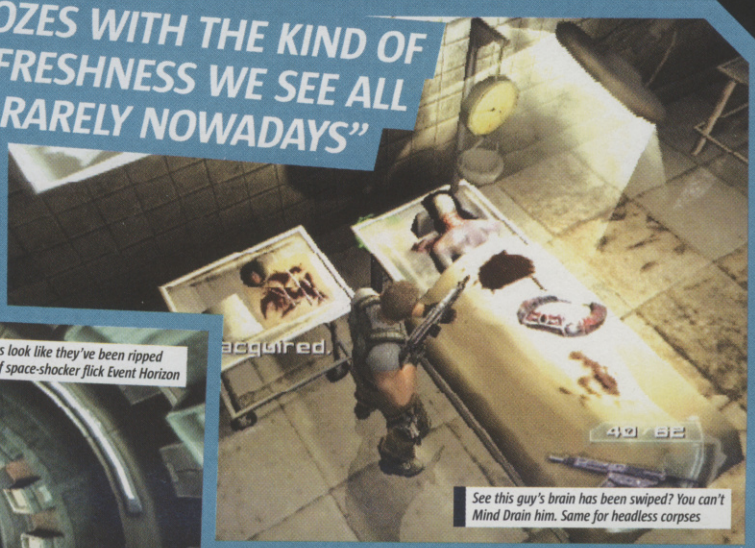

Luckily, you'll shortly overhear some cronies yapping about the combination

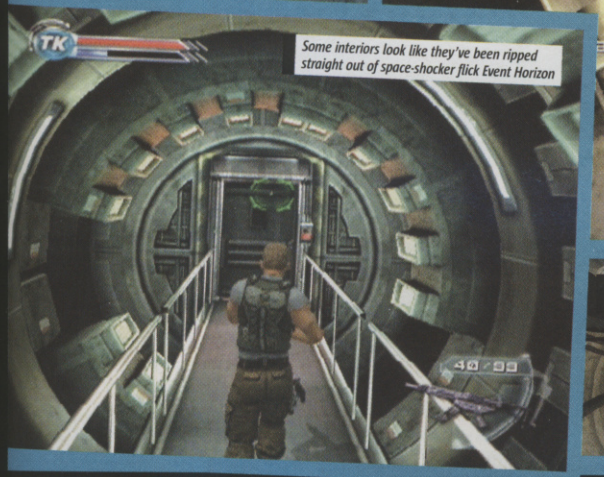

Whack on Remote Viewing and plunge through the door when the coast's clear

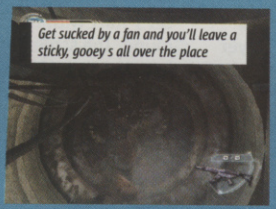

Back at the door, poke in the code you uncovered then grab some Smug Time

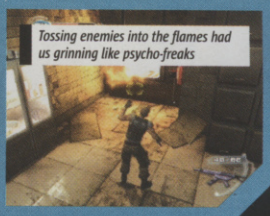
"OOZES WITH THE KIND OF FRESHNESS WE SEE ALL TOO RARELY NOWADAYS"

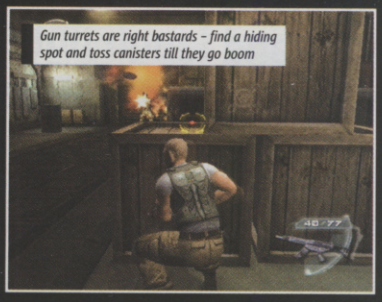

At one point you carry three of these massive bombs about - huge pockets or retractable nads?


See this guy's brain has been swiped? You can't Mind Drain him. Same for headless corpses


Some interiors look like they've been ripped straight out of space-shocker flick Event Horizon


Get sucked by a fan and you'll leave a sticky, gooey s all over the place


Tossing enemies into the flames had us grinning like psycho-freaks


Gun turrets are right bastards – find a hiding spot and toss canisters till they go boom

The environments are mostly typical sci-fi stuff, but effects like this wavy moonlit ocean are nice

PREVIOUS GAMES

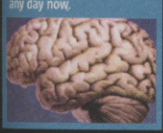
- MLB SlugFest Loaded, The Suffering, SpyHunter 2, Dr. Muto

HARD FACTS

- Six unique Psi abilities including Telekinesis, Pyrokinesis, Mind Control, Remote Viewing, Mind Drain, Aura View
- Eight massive levels

DID YOU KNOW?

- The popular beat-busting chart-combo Cold were responsible for the game's soundtrack, including a song called With My Mind. It's got lyrics and everything! Expect to be seeing the CD in the 50p bin at Woolies any day now.



Something simple like smashing through a glass doorway can be completed by raining down bullets until it's a pile of shards, or chucking massive explosive canisters in its direction – sure it might seem minor, but this sense of freedom goes a long way in masking the otherwise rigid route through the game.

In fact, Psi-Ops simply oozes with the kind of freshness we see all too rarely nowadays. Yes, it slips up now and again – the camera remains stubbornly sluggish throughout and the autolock feature can be cumbersome and unresponsive, causing more unnecessary health loss than we'd like. More annoyingly though, the map system is one of the worst we've seen in a while – your current location is often so goddam vague that working out where you should be going next is an absolute nightmare.

You'll learn to hunt out handy scenery to help in battle – like these exploding barrels

A floating box, a happy dance and an explosive guff all in one shot! You love us

Despite this, the psionic gadgetry at your disposal is so original and well implemented, any potential frustration that might set in over the sometimes unforgiving difficulty and occasionally obscure goals is offset by the fun you'll have tinkering with your tools until everything finally clicks into place and you can proceed.

Ultimately, Psi-Ops provides a gripping, atmospheric and genuinely unique twist on the traditional third-person shoot 'em up genre. The only thing is that its occasional swing into old-skool sci-fi clichés, complete with the characters and locations, might be a turn-off if futuristic yarns aren't your bag. But everyone else should revel in its original, fast-paced and frenzied arcade action. We're off to see if we can Mind Control Nurse CVG into flashing her knickers.

GETTING A HEAD

Whenever you whip out your fancy powers, you'll use up precious Psi energy – run out of the stuff and you'll have to make do with your weapons, assuming you've got ammo left.

Vials containing energy to top up on your psychic powers are pretty rare on the ground, so you'll have to get used to sucking the stuff out of enemy hosts using Mind Drain...

Dead bodies provide the easiest source of extra energy but only contain a limited supply

Sneak up behind enemies and suck while they're still standing for a massive boost

Best of all, keep up with the brain drain and heads pop in a shower of gore, Scanners style

GRAEME — CVG 2ND OPINION

I've got a new favourite hobby. It involves levitating men with my bare hands, puncturing their spazzing bodies with bullets, then dunking their heads into buckets of fire. Lovely way to spend an afternoon. Psi-Ops lets you do all that and makes you feel totally all-powerful in the process. It's one big ESP playground, and it's so much fun it's given me brain strain.

MATT — CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 83
Great physics and nice environments but it all looks depressingly drab

SOUND — 79
Psi effects are suitably sinister and guns sound meaty, but the music's forgettable

GAMEPLAY — 87
Tense blasting action, clever puzzles and the psychic stuff adds a heap of fresh ideas

LASTING APPEAL — 84
The smart AI and ferocious pace makes for a tough and challenging game

If you're a blast addict sick of stale shooters you'll be more than willing to let Psi-Ops invade your brain. You don't need crazy mind powers to know this rules.

OVERALL SCORE 87

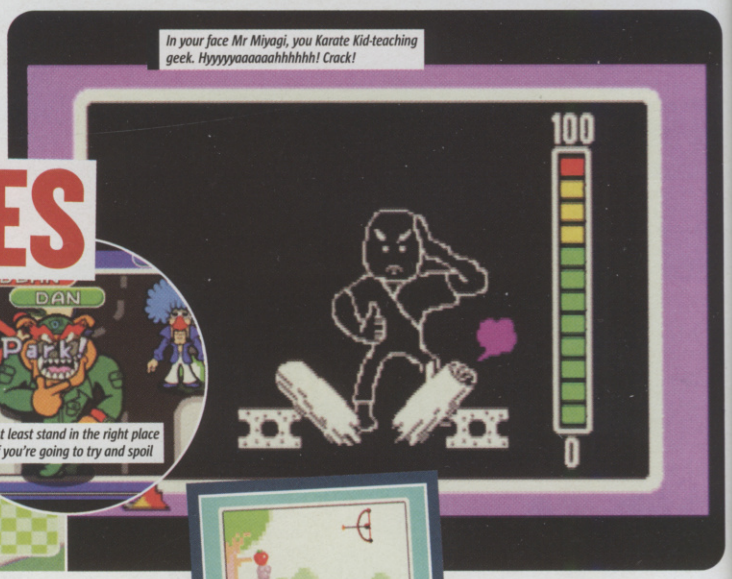
HOW IT COMPARES

- KILL.SWITCH
- PSI-OPS: TMC
- SYPHON FILTER: OS

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
3 SEPT	COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 1-4	PUB: NINTENDO DEV: NINTENDO WWW.WARIOWARE.BIZ CONTACT: 01932 895390

WARIO WARE: MEGA PARTY GAMES

It's time to plug in four pads and laugh until your throat collapses



In your face Mr Miyagi, you Karate Kid-teaching geek. Hyyyyyaaaaaahhhhhh! Crack!

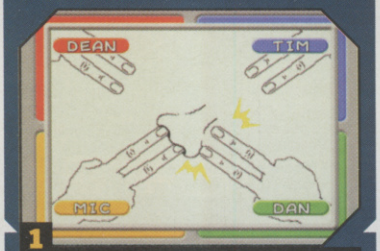
F-Zero's in, so why not Mario Kart? Or PilotWings? Half-a-job...

At least stand in the right place if you're going to try and spoil

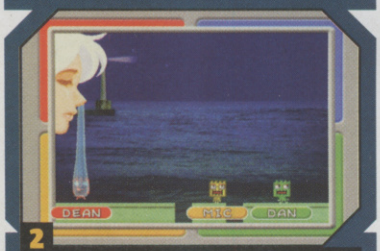
START WITH FOURPLAY

Just fifteen new mini-games may sound like the biggest sting of all time. You're only on for a few seconds at a time, and they're costing over a quid each.

Well, it's not all that bad. Okay, some are a bit random and crap (like picking a random chicken and seeing if he craps a golden egg) but others are mint.



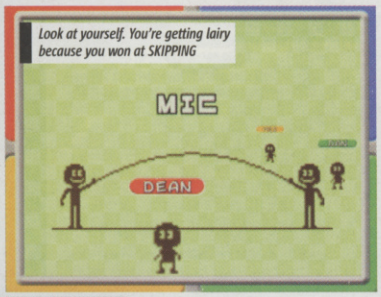
1 ■ A new twist on an old classic: the nose spins in the middle, and everyone has a dig at it



2 ■ Push your mates into the giant dangling bogey. Pray for Jesus' help if you get boxed in

3 ■ React to the alarm. Remember to shout 'BANG!' to unnerve your mates into an early lunge

4 Hit the rusty tin can with your catapult. It's not exactly 21st Century gameplay, but there you go



Look at yourself. You're getting lairy because you won at SKIPPING

Nothing in this world is funnier than four-player Wario Ware. You may have seen a fat person slip over on some ice: A sudden jerk, and their massive frame goes sideways before slapping against the floor.

It's like it's happened in slow motion. But even that's not as funny as this, even if they landed face down in dogshit. This is officially The Funniest.

It's GBA Wario Ware with four players. The same 'easy' three-second challenges, but spiced up by the three other players willing you to fail. Actually forcing you to fail in some cases. As the pressure builds, somebody fails to cut hair, brush teeth or crack an egg into a pan. The room absolutely erupts with laughter. At times, you have to press pause because it's so funny you can't breathe. Or even see.

We all know squeezing one out can be hard sometimes

PAYBACK TIME

Let's start with the first round. The screen is split four ways, and a spotlight pings between the disco dancing characters. If it stops on you, you have to complete a minigame.

At first, you get easy ones. Sometimes the light stops on everyone and you all have to thread a needle or something. But as the pace hots up, panic ensues. You fail to save the guy from the burning building and your mates crack up. Sometimes they laugh so hard they fail to notice the spotlight is on them and they've failed to catch the toast. Who's laughing now?

Better still, when you lose all three lives you can wreck it for whoever pissed you off the most. Your character appears on screen during the mini-games, so you can wander over and stand in the middle of the road so they can't see what cars are coming and get killed. Petty revenge, but an absolute scream.

And everyone develops a 'bogey' game they can't do. No matter how easy. All you have to do it press A when the cat closes his eyes, but you have a mental block and balls it up every time.

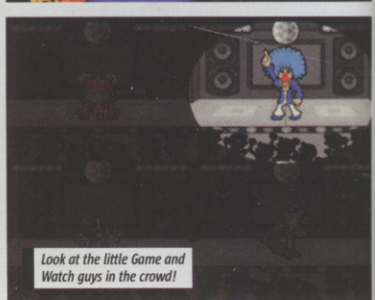
DON'T BE A LONER

Best of all are the all-new four player full-screen games. Your lounge will erupt in screams as you and mates climb over each other to grab the falling banknote. Your mate jumps, and you leap on top of his head and jump again for some extra height. Genius. Even taking turns on a skipping game has the room boiling over with hilarious, nervous excitement.

But you must play it four-player. Please. The single player game is just the GBA one again, and its low-tech looks might sicken

Some of the games display a sense of imagination that could only have emanated from a mental home

The graphics chip goes red with embarrassment at having to draw this

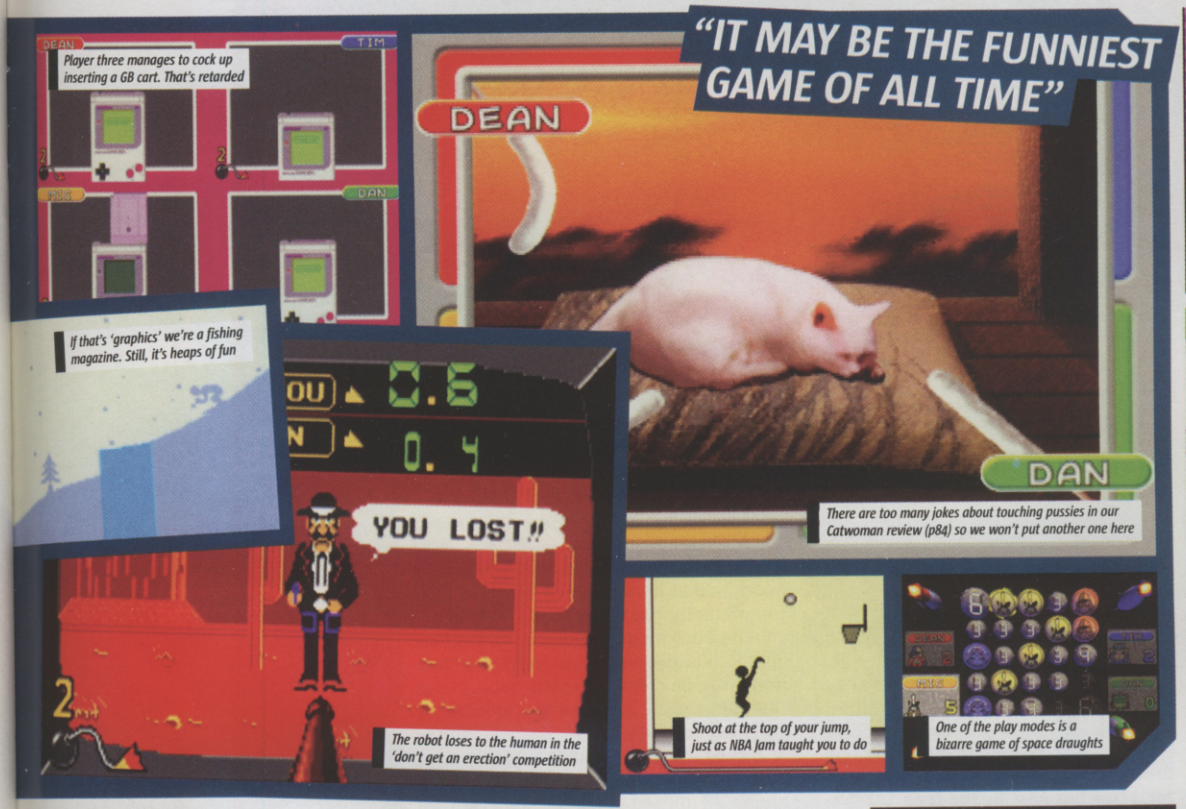

Look at the little Game and Watch guys in the crowd!

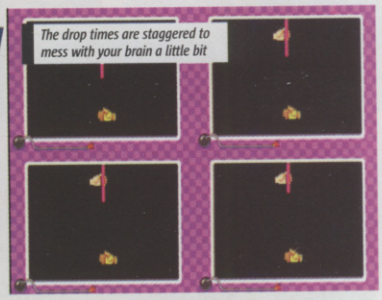
■ The Balloon Bang round is unique, because there's one loser and everyone else gets a win saved on their permanent record.

PUMP FOR YOUR LIFE

You play a mini-game while your mates hammer A to inflate a balloon. If the balloon pops while you're in the hot seat, you lose.

"IT MAY BE THE FUNNIEST GAME OF ALL TIME"





CVG 2ND OPINION

PAUL

Playing Wario Ware on GBA, you sometimes worry that you're becoming a weirdo loner, barking at people to leave you alone so as not to break concentration. So thank goodness for this four-player madness which, without a doubt, is the biggest laugh I've enjoyed in years. Problem is, now I feel like the kind of weirdo that writes 'thank you' letters to Nintendo!

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ You can play loads of the retro ones on here: F-Zero, Metroid, Legend of Zelda...

HARD FACTS

■ There are over 100 mini-games in total
■ Joypad paupers can also use a linked-up GBA to play
■ Wario advises you to unplug your mate's controller in the instruction manual

DID YOU KNOW?

■ Nintendo's ill-fated 3D Virtual Boy console supplies a single mini-game here: the red-screened shell-chucker Mario Clash

you. Honestly, if you only play this ONCE with your mates, it's funny enough to be worth a score.

URINE TROUBLE

But while you're having a slash in between rounds (because actually pissing yourself laughing WOULD be going too far) a thought might hit you: Why in the name of Christ am I playing GBA games on GameCube?! And it's true. Nintendo could have done so much more with this. You should be cracking up to Ocarina Of Time minigames or taking turns sniper headshotting Trevelyan from GoldenEye. At the least we should be looking a shedload of SNES gamelets.

Nintendo knows you're not stupid, and that's why this costs twenty quid. It may be the funniest game of all time, but it's one of the least new 'new' games of all time. The only mini-games that aren't cribbed from the GBA game are the four-player simultaneous ones. And there are only fifteen of those.

CATCH CLAP

Another minus point is the Doctor round. On-screen instructions tell you to pull an angry face or something while playing, and the other players have to tap buttons to applaud how well you did this. Trouble is, petty grudges tear it apart. You're clearly not going to clap the twat that got up in your face for failing to crush

the apple two games before, are you? Play it once, unlock the next round, then forget it.

If you're the sort of person that plays games socially with friends, this needs to go right to the top of your buy list. Yes, even above Halo 2. Because it's out two months before Halo 2. The only thing is to make sure you have the correct peripherals before you start playing: three good mates, all ready to cry laughing. ✷

CVG VERDICT

MIKE

GRAPHICS — 40
The same games as the GBA game. Hardly going to give your Cube an aneurysm

SOUND — 68
A bewildering bombardment of little ditties and comical sound effects. Fairly low tech

GAMEPLAY — 90
The genius of the mini-games is spiced up by the hilarity of watching your mates cock up

LASTING APPEAL — 85
The one 'party' game you can put on and not have people leaving early

It's the reason the GameCube has four holes in the front, and the reason you wear deodourant and brush your teeth. The ultimate party videogame

OVERALL SCORE 84

HOW IT COMPARES
MARIO PARTY 5
WARIO WARE
WARIO WARE GBA

PLAY DIRTY

If you're going to win, you need to wreck it for the other guys. It's part of the game.

They're not going to like it, but sod them. You can make new friends. This is about GLORY. On the other hand, if you can still nail a game when everyone's all over your screen trying to distract you, well, you're the king. And make sure you tell them that. Several times. In a very loud voice.

■ If you bail out on the turtle balancing, you can make your fallen turtle nibble at a mate's stack

■ On the E-Reader game, you can steal 'cards' off a mate while he's engrossed playing

■ Classic interference. Walk all over their game. Guaranteed to get the cuss words flowing

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
COST: £34.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: CODEMASTERS
* DEV: BEST WAY
* WWW.CODEMASTERS.COM/SOLDIERS
* CONTACT: 01926 816 044

ONLINE GAMING
* 2-4 PLAYER CO-OP
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SOLDIERS: HEROES OF WORLD WAR II

A fast 'n' furious action-stuffed strategy game? You betchyo ass!

If you have a toolkit on board, fix the tank at the earliest opportunity

CVG SILVER AWARD

The explosions and animations are all amazingly believable

There are a few tense night time missions, each requiring a different tactical approach

"SOLDIERS IS SO MUCH FASTER AND FRESHER GAMEPLAY-WISE THAN ANYTHING THAT HAS GONE BEFORE"

It looks quiet, but the red dots on the mini-map show that the Germans are everywhere

It's rare that you get to control more than three or four tanks, but when you do it's a real treat

Sadly, you can't climb trees. Hopefully they'll chuck that into the sequel

Most PC real-time strategy games are drier than a granny's fanny, and take so long to get going that you're eligible for a free bus pass by the time you've bodged together a half-decent army.

And aside from the obvious graphical advances, the RTS front line has barely budged forward since Command & Conquer first appeared almost a decade ago. At least that's what we reckoned, until Soldiers frog-marched across our sleepy monitors.

Battling through yet another World War II setting might seem about as appealing as slicing off your nuggets with a rusty bayonet, but don't slap your sack on the chopping board just yet. Fact is Soldiers is so much faster and fresher gameplay-wise than anything that has gone before, so the whole WWII strategy experience feels revitalised.

As simple as it sounds, this is mostly down to the control system. The controls are split between the traditional method (where troops are rounded up by dragging the mouse around them and clicking where you want them to go) and what's called Direct Control, where you direct single units in a top-down shooter stylee.

DUAL DUELLING

As schizoid as it might seem this dual control method works wickedly, allowing you to switch between an all-guns-blazing approach or deeply tactical method where troops can be ordered to carry out countless precise manoeuvres, from taking cover behind walls to laying mines. With so many tactical commands available, resource management isn't missed at all.

Looks-wise it's super slick. The attention to period detail is outclassed only by the spectacular way that virtually everything is utterly destructible. Nail a tank and the turret will rip off and tumble across the map in an awesomely realistic style.

The focus on instant action will no doubt upset diehard RTS geeks who can recite the muzzle velocities of every tank ever made or those who live for resource management, but fun seekers after an instant strategy hit will go nuts for it.

As for the multiplayer modes, most have been held back for a future patch release. Nonetheless, if you've been put off by strategy games in the past, Soldiers demands attention. It's the most spectacular and action-rammed tactical thriller we've played in yonks. ✷

PREVIOUS GAMES
■ Soldiers is Best Way's first

HARD FACTS
■ 4 campaigns, 6 bonus missions, 32 driveable vehicles

DID YOU KNOW?
■ Soldiers was originally called Outfront by its Ukrainian creators – the title remains as one of the extra missions

ARMY MOVES

You can set your troops to be aggressive or defensive, and can send 'em running down roads or crawling through bushes – nothing new there.

What is new is that you repair damaged tanks and even siphon off fuel from totalled enemy vehicles to keep your war machine rolling. And while you're giving all that lot a go, try these other manoeuvres on for size...

1 ■ Order your other troops to follow and protect the guy you are directly controlling

2 ■ Make them crouch behind crates and walls for cover, or sneak through swamps to outflank someone

3 ■ Set fire to the grass and you can be sure the enemy patrols will move away sharpish

4 ■ Use mines to set up an ambush, but make sure your troops are well-placed for when the lead flies

If only first-person shooters were as destructive as this

Allied armour is no match for the German tanks head-on

RICHIE

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 91
If war is an art, these 3D landscapes are bloody masterpieces

SOUND 82
Authentic sound and stirring music – but nothing we haven't heard before

GAMEPLAY 90
The small unit action is fast, unique and strategically satisfying

LASTING APPEAL 86
The single player campaigns are lengthy and not easy, but there's not much multiplayer

The action is tense and relentless, the detail in the devastation is breathtaking and the whole thing feels fresh, fast and original in spite of the WWII setting.

OVERALL SCORE 88

HOW IT COMPARES
HIDDEN & DANGEROUS 2
SOLDIERS
COMMANDOS 3

RELEASE DATE
6 AUGUST

GAME INFO
COST: £29.99
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
- PUB: DIGITAL JESTERS
- DEV: CYANIDE STUDIOS
- WWW.CYANIDE-STUDIO.COM
- CONTACT: 01707 871516

PC CD ROM

CHAOS LEAGUE

Exploding pigs, psycho cheerleaders and full-on strategy?! Say goodbye to the beautiful game

The players look surprisingly good up close. From a distance they look like angry dots

Here's a couple of lady pom-poms we're more than happy to stay clear of...

Whack up the player aggression and everyone quickly huddles in for a full-on bloodbath

Initially, the action's slightly overwhelming, but the tutorial helps sort the men from the psychotic ten-foot ogres

The pre-set team formations are handy but tend to collapse in the throws of a fistfight

CLASS ACT

Chaos League features ten different character races to tamper with and challenge.

Each race differs significantly from the next in terms of strength, speed and general play-style – if you want to become a true Chaos Champion, you'll have to examine and exploit the weaknesses inherent in each team's methods

1 ■ Humans don't have any particular physical skills, but can get the crowd on their side easily - useful

2 ■ Being puny forest sprites, Wood Elves prefer to spread across the pitch and rely on passing the ball

3 ■ Unsurprisingly, Dwarves are short, hairy and full of rage. Expect them to run at you like midget buffalo

4 ■ These guys use their wolf-like agility to tear around the pitch – stay on your toes and keep away from their claws

Let's clear something up right now – somewhat disappointingly, Chaos League isn't the ultra-violent 'Pro Evo with monsters' fest we were hoping for. It actually turns out to be a, well, an RTS with nobbly balls.

FANTASY FOOTBALL

The idea's pretty simple – two teams of fantasy-themed monsters/heroes (think Gondor Park Rangers vs Mordor Bromich Albion) slug it out on one of five fantasy-themed pitches in an effort to score the most touchdowns, American Football-stylee. The twist? Bone-shattering carnage is near compulsory, and actual rules are pretty thin on the ground.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Cycling Manager 4, Horse Racing Manager

HARD FACTS
- 10 races with unique styles of play
- 80 teams with 60 different types of players
- 170 spells and skills to beef up individual players
- Quick Match
- Championship and Career modes

DID YOU KNOW?
- Although Charles Goodyear patented vulcanised rubber in 1844, it wasn't until 1871 that the stuff was widely used to make footballs. Before that, balls were usually created by inflating animal bladders and sticking them in a leather pouch – or, as was traditional in Dark Ages Britain, using the head of a Danish invader.

Your nine-man team can happily smash and spell-cast their way to the other end of the field, ball in hand, while you direct the action using the point-and-click interface.

All players come equipped with a Health meter and Breath gauge. The first is self-explanatory – take too much of a beating and you're dust. Breath however, depletes as your men get physical – whether that's powering up a spell, or using an attribute such as Aggression, which affects their likelihood of going properly medieval on an opponent's ass.

PLAYING DIRTY

If you don't think your team's up to scratch, you could always try bribing the medics to dope other players, slipping the ref a bung or even chucking fog bombs onto the pitch to drastically impair visibility. Despite all this sporting naughtiness, the challenge always remains strong enough to maintain the sense of strategy.

Featuring both frantic real-time and more sedate turn-based tactical forms of play, the game isn't the brutal football bloodbath we expected. But it does manage to at least be one of the more imaginative RTS games we've seen recently.

It's daft, brutal and full of cool ideas but ultimately, though, not all that deep. While there are plenty of different modes to keep you occupied for a while, Chaos League manages to skirt energetically around the edges of sport and strategy without ever really excelling at either. ✷

If you're intending to stay in one piece, stay away from the wolfman's balls

Turn-based play allows more time for strategies like pre-plotting player movement

MATT

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 74
Character designs are nice and cartoony but overall, nothing exceptional

SOUND — 71
Atmospheric on-pitch sounds and music but the 'comedy' commentary grates

GAMEPLAY — 64
It's fun initially but too lightweight to maintain extended interest

LASTING APPEAL — 59
Multiplayer's fun but you'll probably tire of things before exhausting all modes

It's a laugh for a while but the limited strategy elements mean once the novelty value's evaporated, you'll find the whole thing wearing thin pretty quickly.

OVERALL SCORE 63

HOW IT COMPARES
- PERIMETER
- CHAOS LEAGUE
- GROUND CONTROL II

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
23 JULY	COST: £19.99 PLAYERS: 4	* PUB: TAKE-TWO * DEV: 3DO * CONTACT: 01753 496 660

ARMY MEN SARGE'S WAR

More recycled plastic that should've been left in the bin

Young kids might like it. But if you're old enough to read this, forget about it

The explosion effects are some of the worst in the business, believe us

"NO ONE HAS WANTED TO PLAY WITH PLASTIC TOY SOLDIERS SINCE AROUND THE TIME OF LORD NELSON"

The game has to load the next section of the level every few minutes or so

NO TIME TO BLEED

There's little worth highlighting about this other than the fact it's the biggest waste of money since Juan Veron. But, no – hang on, there is one pretty cool thing about the game.

Since all the soldiers are made of injection moulded plastic, when they get hit they can end up with some interesting damage.

1 ■ You could drive a bus through that hole. A toy bus

2 ■ Much like the game, this soldier has no brains

3 ■ Even after a battering, Sarge keeps on going

It's sometimes good to play a game this bad, as it reminds you that real life isn't as crap as you were beginning to think it was.

The Army Men series has, in the last five years, been about as consistent in providing fun and entertainment as the shipping forecast. Like importing destitute Mexicans to work in abattoirs, playing Army Men games is something Americans do, but we avoid.

For those new to it all, they feature plastic toy soldiers duking it out, with the Greens being the good guys, and the Tans the baddies.

PREVIOUS GAMES
■ Army Men, Army Men 2, Army Men 3D

HARD FACTS
■ 12 Single player levels
■ First Army Men game released on Xbox
■ 3 Multiplayer modes – Deathmatch, Team Advance, and Capture The Flag

DID YOU KNOW?
■ The first Army Men game came out on in 1998. That's six years of pain.

TUPPERWARE TROOPS

What you do in this one is run Sarge through a succession of battlefields – some in the real world, some in toyland – blasting Tan soldiers in an extremely simplistic third-person manner.

Unlike last time, Sarge is alone here, all his Heroes having been reduced to the raw materials of a biro by Colonel Malice and the brutal Tan army. Sarge is understandably pissed off at this (after all, he would have had to find a bloody landfill site before he could bury his non-biodegradable buddies) and sets off on a one-man quest for plastic payback.

The thing is, almost everything is wrong with this game. The graphics are awful, and wouldn't have cut it two years ago (when this game was originally supposed to come out on GameCube) let alone now. Enemy AI is non-existent – observe those twats running on the spot facing a brick wall. The targeting system is a nonsense too, as simply running round pressing fire in the enemy's general direction is a better option.

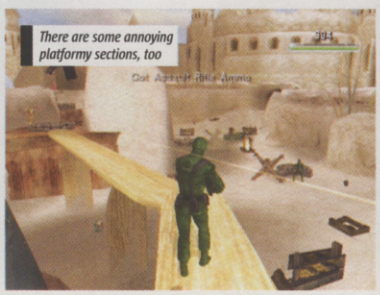
This is Sarge. They don't make 'em like they used to. Thank God

WHAT'S THE POINT?

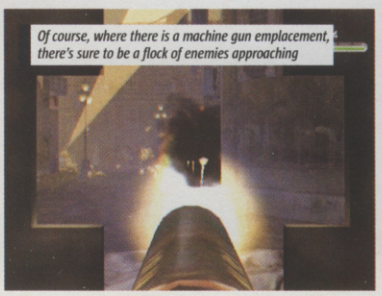
But the key problem for a game about playing with plastic toy soldiers is that no one has wanted to play with plastic toy soldiers since around the time of Lord Nelson. You may as well make a game based on a spinning top.

Okay, so there are tanks, air-strikes and such, but they all look so toss and add so little to the game that they might as well not have bothered.

At last count, there have been around 20 Army Men games released, approximately none of which were any good. As far as we're concerned, persisting with this series is about as good an idea as flogging a dead, plastic horse. Please, all of you, write a letter to your local MPs and ask them to make it stop. ✷



There are some annoying platformy sections, too



Of course, where there is a machine gun emplacement, there's sure to be a flock of enemies approaching

Chuck a grenade anywhere near an enemy APC and it goes up in flames

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 44
Awful animatons, excruciating explosions – it's in 3D at least. Otherwise, pretty dire

SOUND — 50
Generic war noises plus some annoying gung-ho Yank Marine-type shouting

GAMEPLAY — 37
You've seen it all before, this bog-standard third-person action lark. Very bog

LASTING APPEAL — 32
You'll surely give up well before the end. It'd be better for you if you did

Okay, so it's cheap, but so are bags of nails, and they aren't much fun, neither. Maybe this will be the last ever Army Men game – please God, PLEASE!

OVERALL SCORE 39

HOW IT COMPARES
SYPHON FILTER
ARMY MEN: SARGE'S WAR
CONFLICT DESERT STORM 2

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Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Mario Golf: Advance Tour
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Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Operation Armoured Liberty
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Serious Sam Advance
Shining Force: Dark Dragon
Shrek: Hassle at Castle
Sonic Adavnce 3
Sonic Advance 2
Sonic Battle
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
Spyro Fusion
Spyro: Season of Ice
Super Mario Advance 2
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
Yu-Gi-Oh! Dung.Dice Mons.
Yu-Gi-Oh! Sacred Cards
Yu-Gi-Oh! World C.Tour.'04
Yu-Gi-Oh! World Wide Ed.
Zelda: A Link to the Past

Plus Many More...

PC

Age of Empires
Age of Empires 2
Age of Mythology: Titans
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Call of Duty
Cat Woman*
Champ. Manager '03/'04
Championship Manager 4
Com. & Conq.: Tiberian Sun
Escape from Monkey Island
Far Cry
Fargate
Freelancer
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Line of Sight: Vietnam
Manhunt
Master of Olympus
Master of Orion 3
Medal of Honor: All. Assault
Medieval: Total War
Moto GP 2
Neverwinter Nights
Sim City 3000
Sim City 4
Sims
Singles: Flirt Up Your Life
Splinter Cell
Stronghold
The Great Escape
Theme Hospital
Tomb Raider 2
Warcraft 3: Reign of Chaos
X Com Apocalypse
X Com Intercepter
X Wing
X2: The Threat
XIII (Thirteen)

Plus Many More...

GAMECUBE

Aggressive Inline
Bad Boys 2*
Billy Hatcher and Giant Egg
Call of Duty: Finest Hour*
Celebrity Deathmatch
Dark Alliance, Baldur's Gate
Dave Mirra Freestyle BMX 2
Def Jam Vendetta
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai
Enter the Matrix
Eternal Darkness
FIFA 2003
Final Fantasy C. Chronicles
Harry Potter: P. Azkaban
Leg. of Zelda: Ocarina of T.
Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour
Mario Sunshine
Matrix, Enter the
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Metal Gear Solid: T. Snakes
Metroid Prime
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Pokemon Colosseum
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Resident Evil
Resident Evil 3: Nemesis
Resident Evil Zero
Shrek 2
Shrek: Extra Large
Simpsons: Hit & Run
Sims: Bustin' Out
Sonic Adventure 2 Battle
Sonic Heroes
Sonic Mega Collection
Soul Calibur 2
Sphinx & Cursed Mummy
Spiderman The Movie
Splinter Cell
Splinter Cell 2: Pandora T.*
Star Wars: Bounty Hunter
Star Wars: Clone Wars
Star Wars: Jedi Knight 2
Star Wars: Rebel Strike
Starfox Adventures
Super Mario Sunshine
Super Monkey Ball
Super Smash Bros Melee
The Hobbit
The L. of Zelda: Majora's M.
The L. of Zelda: Mast. Quest
The L. of Zelda: WindWaker
The Matrix
The Reckoning, Hunter
The Return of the King
The Scorpion King
The Simpsons: Hit & Run
The Sims
The Sims: Bustin Out
The Twin Snakes
The Two Towers
Theme Park Adventure
Throwdown, UFC
Tiger Woods Golf 2003
Tiger Woods Golf 2004
Toadstool Tour
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 3
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Top Gun: Combat Zones
True Crime: Streets of LA
Turok, Evolution
Ty the Tasmanian Tiger
Wolverine's Revenge
Zelda: Majora's Mask
Zelda: Master Quest
Zelda: Ocarina of Time
Zelda: The Wind Waker

Plus Many More...

X-BOX

Baldur's Gate: D. Alliance 2
Baldur's Gate: Dark Alliance
Blinx: The Time Sweeper
BloodRayne
Broken Sword: S. Dragon
Buffy 2: Chaos.Bleeds
Buffy The Vampire Slayer
Champ. Manager '01/'02
Championship Manager '02
Combat Elite: WWII Paras*
Conflict: Desert Storm
Crash B'coot: Wr. of Cortex
Dark Alliance, Baldur's Gate
Dead to Rights
Dino Crisis 3
DRIV3R
Dungeon & Dragons:Heroes
Fight Night 2004
Full Spectrum Warrior
Ghost Recon:Island Thunder
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: Vice City
Great Escape
Halo
Heroes, D&D
Hitman 3: Contracts
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
Jet Set Radio Future
LMA Manager 2003
LMA Manager 2004
Lord of the Rings: F. of Ring
Lord of the Rings: R.of King
Mace Griffin: Bounty Hunter
Mafia
Manhunt
Matrix, Enter the
Max Payne
Max Payne 2
Medal of Honor Frontline
Medal of Honor: R. Sun
Mission Impossible:O.Surma
Morrowind
Mortal Kombat: Deadly All.
MX Unleashed
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
Ninja Gaiden
Painkiller*
Pirates of the Caribbean
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
Project Gotham Racing
Project Gotham Racing 2
Rainbow Six 3
Raw 2, WWE
Red Dead Revolver
Secret W. Over Normandy
Shadow Ops: Red Mercury
Sims: Bustin' Out
Splinter Cell
Splinter Cell 2: Pandora T.
Star Trek: Shattered Gal.
Star Wars: Knights Old Rep.
Starcraft: Ghost*
Suffering
Terminator: Dawn of Fate
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The Suffering
The Thing
Thief: Deadly Shadows
Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 4
Tony Hawk's Underground
True Crime: Streets of LA
UEFA Euro 2004
Unreal 2: The Awakening
Unreal: Championship Ed.
Van Helsing
WWE Raw 2: Ruthless Aggr.
XIII (Thirteen)
Yager

Plus Many More...

PLAYSTATION 2

A = 0 1
Age of Empires 2
Alias
Aliens vs Predator:Extinction
Angel of Darkness
Athens 2004*
B = 0 2
Bad Boys 2
Baldur's Gate: D. Alliance 2
Blade 2
Broken Sword 3: S. Dragon
Buffy 2: Chaos Bleeds
C = 0 3
Champions of Norrath
Conflict Zone
Conflict: Desert Storm 2
Crash B'coot: Wr. of Cortex
D = 0 4
Dark Cloud 2
Dead to Rights
Devil May Cry 2
Die Hard: Vendetta
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai
Dragon Ball Z: Budokai 2
Drakengard
DRIV3R
Dynasty Warriors 2
Dynasty Warriors 3: Xtr.Leg.
Dynasty Warriors 4
E = 0 5
Enter the Matrix
Escape from Monkey Island
Euro 2004
Evil Dead: Fist. of Boomstick
F = 0 6
FIFA 2003
FIFA 2004
Fight Night 2004
Final Fantasy X
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G = 0 7
G1 Jockey
Getaway
Ghost Hunter
Ghost Recon: Jungle Storm
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Gran Turismo 4 Pro.Edition
Grand Theft Auto 3
Grand Theft Auto: V. City
H = 0 8
Harry Potter: Chamber of S.
Harry Potter: P. of Azkaban
Headhunter
Hitman 2: Silent Assassin
Hitman 3: Contracts
Hulk
Hyper Street Fighter 2
I = 0 9
Indiana Jones: Emp.'s Tomb
J = 1 0
Jak & Daxter
Jak 2: Renegade
James Bond: E. or Nothing
L = 1 2
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Midnight Club 2
Monkey Island, Escape from
N = 1 4
Need for Speed Undergr'nd
No One Lives Forever
O = 1 5
Onimusha: Demon Siege
P = 1 6
Premier Manager 2002
Premier Manager 2003
Primal
Prince of Persia: S. of Time
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R = 1 8
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Ratchet and Clank 2
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S = 1 9
Secret W. Over Normandy
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Simpsons: Hit & Run
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Sims: Bustin' Out
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T = 2 0
Terminator 3 R.of Machines
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W = 2 3
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Die Hard Trilogy
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Dragonball Z: Final Bout
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Final Fantasy 9
Harry Potter: Philosophers S.
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LMA Manager 2001
LMA Manager 2002
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Parasite Eve 2
Premier Manager 2000
Resident Evil
Soul Reaver
Spec Ops: Stealth Patrol
Spiderman
Theme Park World
TOCA Touring Cars 2
TOCA World Touring Cars
Tomb Raider 3
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Tony Hawk's Pro Skater 2
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IMPORT REVIEWS

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RETREAT TO SAFETY!

After last month's tussle with the mother of all Japanese imports (Winning Post 6 Maximum 2004), we're playing it safe with a few US games. Since we've a long while to wait for Zelda: Four Swords on a UK GameCube, and may never see Front Mission 4 over here on PS2, these seemed like a good place to start.

As a special treat to ourselves, we got hold of the PS2 Mega Man Collection and Mario Golf for GBA... the UK version is scheduled for December, but we fancy playing it through summer. As for Silent Hill 4, the UK release date is close enough for us to wait a little longer, but the Japanese version had an English language option that we couldn't resist. So, thanks once again to CEX (www.cex.co.uk) for the loan of SH4.

Only Japan continues to enjoy its gaming throughout summer. In July there have been quite a few major releases, with a Boktai sequel for GBA and the long-awaited King Of Fighters Maximum Impact on PS2 among them. Sadly it looks like Dead Or Alive Online has now been sidelined indefinitely in Japan and the US, so we guess it's now a case of watch this space.

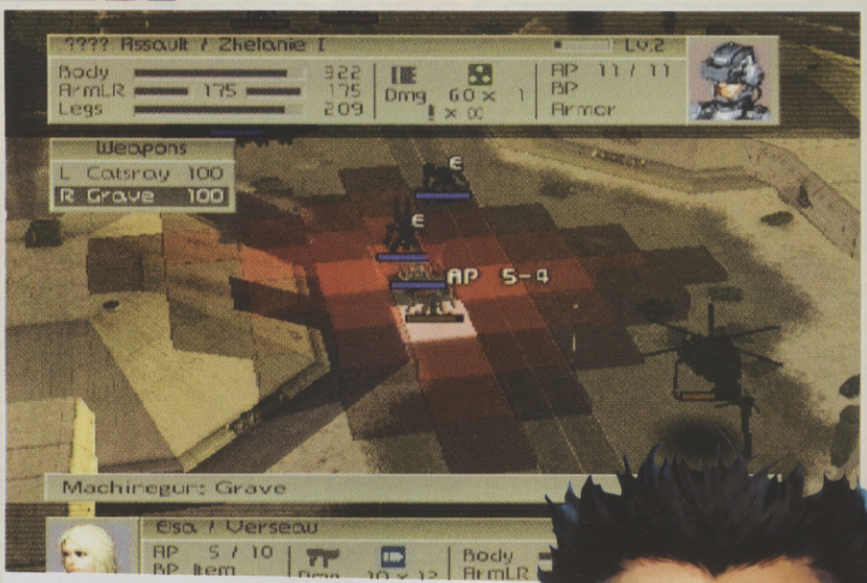
Finally we should mention that July sees the final release of a game for SNK's Neo-Geo AES. Samurai Spirits Zero Special launched the day this issue of CVG went on sale, and marks the end of a truly amazing era. On the other hand, thank God SNK won't be clinging to that old 16-bit system any longer. We can't wait to see what those genius guys can do now their imaginations can run wild.

Paul Davies

Paul Davies *The Import King*

PS2

RELEASE DATE	GAME INFO	CONTACT INFO
OUT NOW	IMPORT COST: £55 PLAYERS: 1	✷ PUB: SQUARE ENIX ✷ DEV: SQUARE ENIX ✷ WWW.SQUARE-ENIX-USA.COM/GAMES/FM4



FRONT MISSION 4

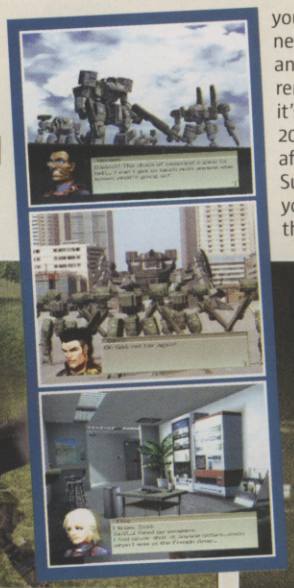
The celebrated Mech series makes a pompous PS2 debut

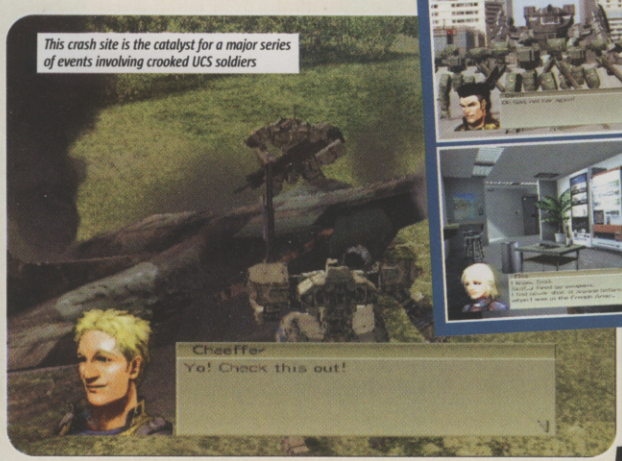
We're big on games that help showcase a console's true power, which is why most Square Enix games leave us wagging our tails in appreciation.

True to form, Front Mission 4 boots up with a gobsmacking CG movie featuring the walking tanks known as Wanzers scooting about a city, firing rockets and spiking each other with pointed rods.

LOADED WITH DYNAMITE

When the in-game graphics kick in, it's no less of a reward – a mysterious attack on German Wanzer base Sachsen-Anhalt is the prelude to your adventures as a newbie Wanzer pilot, and is fantastically rendered. Anyhow, it's now the year 2096 (six years after the original Super NES FM), and your first posting is the European





This crash site is the catalyst for a major series of events involving crooked UCS soldiers

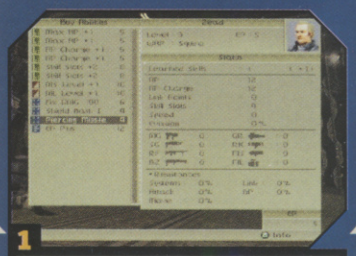
When you're through setting up your Wanzer, why not appreciate your lovely handiwork?

"IT BOOTS UP WITH A GOBSMACKING CG MOVIE FEATURING WALKING TANKS"

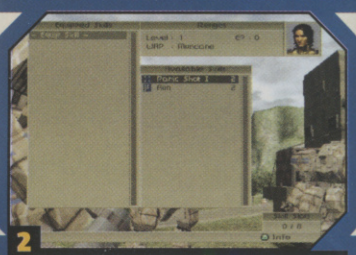
MECHNICAL COLLEGE

Adding skill upgrades makes an immediate difference, and it's a thrill to be at an advantage where previously you were the underdog.

It's best not to get too ambitious, though. Take things gradually instead of going straight for a major overhaul.



1 ■ *Invest in smaller stuff like Panic and Terror Shot to begin with, as these puppies buy you time*



2 ■ *You're really limited to the number of Skill Points per on-board computer, so be sure to allocate 'em wisely*

3 ■ *Something as simple as Aim improves chances of survival by guaranteeing hits on target. Duh!*

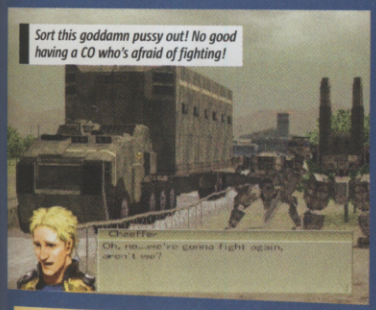
4 ■ *We're still figuring out how to do these, but Skill Combos deal out enormous damage. Learn 'em, and fast*

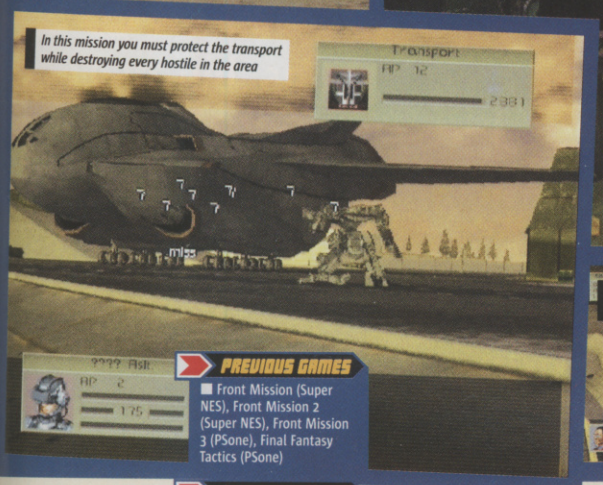
■ Front Mission uses coloured squares to represent range of movement and attack distance. You'll be learning

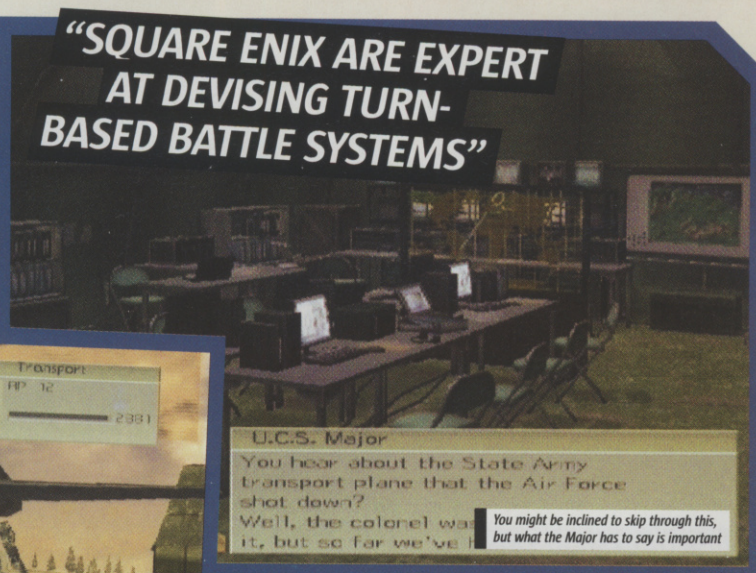
AT HOME ON THE RANGE

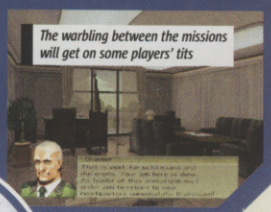
the hard way how best to position squads to take full advantage of their long- and short-range weapon capabilities.

"SQUARE ENIX ARE EXPERT AT DEVISING TURN-BASED BATTLE SYSTEMS"









PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Front Mission (Super NES), Front Mission 2 (Super NES), Front Mission 3 (PSone), Final Fantasy Tactics (PSone)

HARD FACTS

■ Brand new Link System
■ Environmental effects
■ Now includes voiceovers

DID YOU KNOW?

■ The first 'mechanical man' was built by Albertus Magnus in the 13th century. Apparently it annoyed his then apprentice Thomas Aquinas so much he smashed it to pieces!

Community Armour Tactics Research Corps, otherwise known as Durandal.

YOU WANZER

With FM4, you've signed up for Wanzer duty. A Wanzer is, by definition, a walking tank, as in 'Walking' and 'Panzer'. We think it's a stupid name, and that they should have combined 'Walking' and 'Tank', but then it would have been a game full of Wankers, so maybe it was for the best that they didn't.

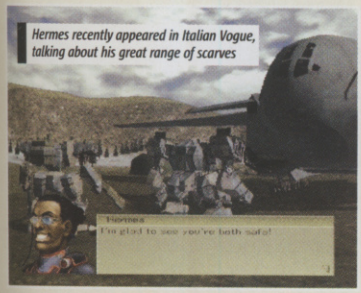
Anyhow, Wanzers are similar to the colossal robots in MechAssault on Xbox, but smaller in scale and therefore nippy – but no less powerful. Also in FM4 all the action is turn-based, whereas MechAssault is a real-time simulator. The turn-based gameplay helps here because you are in control of a whole team. Square Enix is expert at devising turn-based battle systems from all its RPG work.

All Wanzers are constructed of four main body parts: the torso, legs, and two arms. Each part has its own damage meter to monitor. While you can hold out for repairs without the use of arms and legs, it's evacuation time if the torso's had it.

Weapons range from machine guns, through high-calibre single-shot firearms and thumping melee types. These are carried in either hand, and mounted in the shoulders. Of course, Wanzer aficionados get a bang from upgrading to the most powerful weapons available, but it's not what you wield but the way that you wield it that gets results.

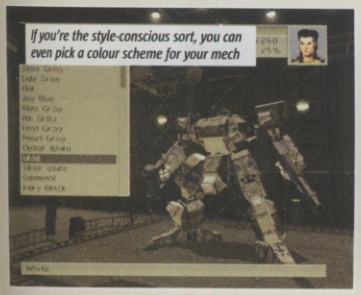
WANZER BONANZA

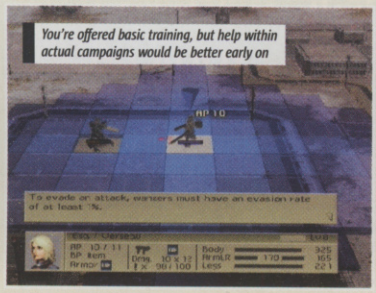
Almost forgot to mention the Square Enix intros! The one in FM4 is a right rabble-rouser, offering a sneak peak at Wanzer Link attacks.

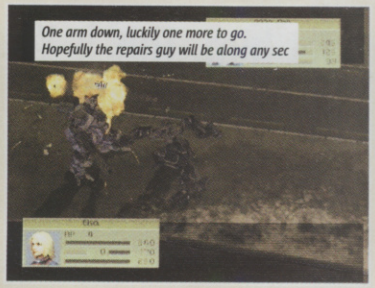


NOTCHING UP THOSE SKILLS

The way to increase power is a combination of pilot skill and Wanzer ability. In FM4 the upgrade currency is Enhancement Points, which can be applied to sharpening the pilot's battle smarts, or investing in Wanzer parts. For the pilot







Action Points (AP) dictate how many times he/she attacks or evades in one turn. For the Wanzer, EP acquires weapon enhancements, or allows dual-wielding attacks to settle things quickly. With enough EP you can even upgrade the on-board computer, allowing Link Attacks – moves that work with the assistance of team mates. Tag-team Wanzers!

DON'T PRESS THE RED BUTTON

Despite loving the whole Wanzer set-up, we think Square Enix shot itself in its giant metal foot a little bit. FM4 throws you in at the deep end with only basic explanations of how to handle the initial campaigns. Not only is this daunting, but it stands in the way of your enjoyment. In the heat of a major confrontation with your Wanzer squad all tuned to deadly perfection, FM4 is class. However you must struggle to reach this level, and even then you could say FM4 can be too heavy-going. ✷

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 84
The Wanzers are lavishly detailed, but the overall effect is a little greyish

SOUND — 80
Hugely satisfying effects for the weapons, plus eerie atmospherics for each location

GAMEPLAY — 79
Nothing new, but the turn-based gameplay is finely tuned and the Link system is cool

LASTING APPEAL — 78
There's no multiplayer so you've only the single-player missions to soldier through

Anyone hardcore into Front Mission since SNES days will be loving it. Yet even those guys might wish that the proceedings were better constructed

OVERALL SCORE 79

HOW IT COMPARES
ADVANCE WARS 2
FRONT MISSION 4
DISGAEA

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: IMPORT COST: £35 PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO: PUB: NINTENDO DEV: CAMELOT WWW.MARIO-GOLF.COM

MARIO GOLF ADVANCE TOUR

Forget him. This is You Golf. Get involved

Ever wondered where Mario is when Bowser shows up to kidnap Princess Peach? He's on the golf course shouting "Bollocks!" when he slices his tee shot, and hitting Yoshi with a 9 Iron whenever he tries to have a an eggy shit in the bunker.

At first, it seems like developer Camelot has made Golden Sun: The Lost Golf Ball. You want to get out there and hit balls, but all anyone wants to do it talk. Talk, talk, talk. You don't mind if they're teaching you to hit sweet backspin approach shots, but it's a pain in the arse when all they want to bang on about is how great Mario is. Wait till the mushroom traces show up in the drugs test, though. Then he's in trouble.

BLOWING CHUNKS

The courses, well, they look like vomit. At least in static screens they do. In the game, it looks okay in a whizzy SNES Mode 7 kind of way. We do wonder when it was decided that pre-rendered characters look better than tidy little sprites. Bad call, boys.

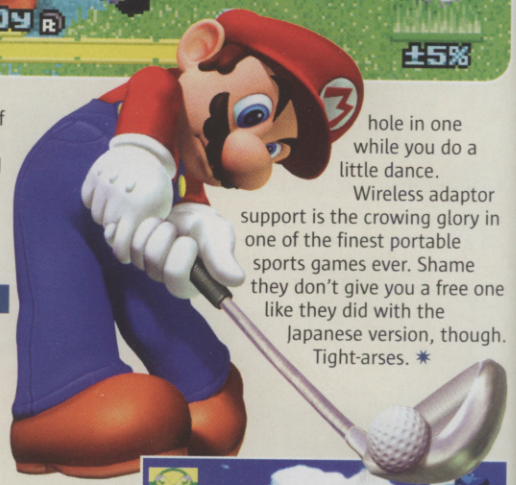
More importantly, this plays brilliant golf. It robs the controls from the N64 and GameCube games to give you an unprecedented amount of control over a Game Boy golf ball. Once you've got your brain around the aiming and how far the balls actually go in practice, you could hit Bowser in the nuts with a Titleist from 100 yards.

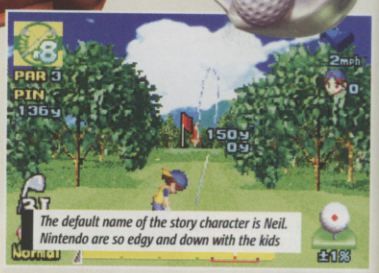
PIPE DREAM

The Career mode flows nicely, and that's where you unlock the real Nintendo gubbins in Advance Tour. Plush fairways and torturous links are fine, but you really want to be chipping into big green pipes and seeing your ball get a kick of speed from a Mario Kart-style boost strip.

Brilliantly, the game automatically saves your best holes to the cart, so you can hold up your GBA replaying a hole in one while you do a little dance.

Wireless adaptor support is the crowing glory in one of the finest portable sports games ever. Shame they don't give you a free one like they did with the Japanese version, though. Tight-arses. ✷





The default name of the story character is Neil. Nintendo are so edgy and down with the kids

MAGIC MUSHROOM

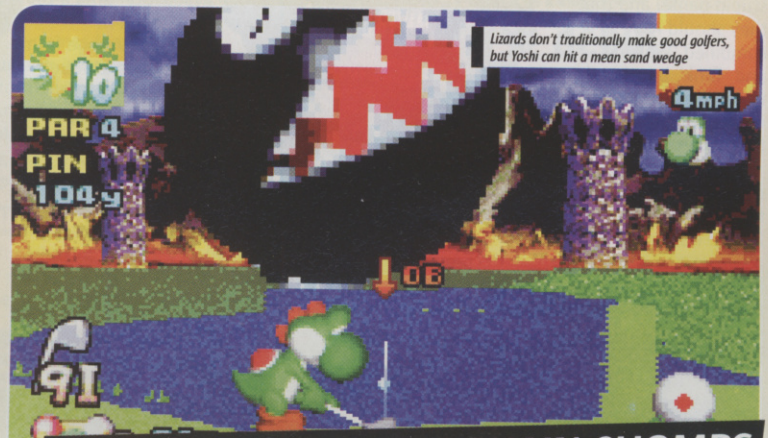
The Mushroom Course, predictably, is genius. The very first green is a GIANT MARIO FACE. Those dirty snappy Chain Chomps are everywhere waiting to chew your balls, and there are pressure pads you can hit to make bombs go off.

That usually doesn't happen at a real golf tournament, unless Bin Laden decides to take action against Tiger Woods' frog-eyes.

1 ■ It looks wicked, until you land on his big fat face and realise it's an enormous bunker. Bummer

2 ■ Hit the question mark block, and trigger a random effect. Like pissing-down rain

3 ■ He pops up on the practice course. Whack a ball at the bugger to send him packing



"THOSE DIRTY SNAPPY CHAIN CHOMPS ARE EVERYWHERE, WAITING TO CHEW YOUR BALLS"

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ Mario Golf: Toadstool Tour, Mario Kart: Double Dash!! Mario Tennis

HARD FACTS

■ US GBA/GC connectivity
■ New Story mode
■ 18-hole courses with bunkers and water hazards

DID YOU KNOW?

■ The Romans played a game resembling golf by striking a feather-stuffed ball with branches. In the 1800s, the gutta-percha ball, or 'gutty', replaced the feather-filled ball that had been used for centuries.

CVG VERDICT

MIKE

GRAPHICS — 71
Pre-rendered characters look blurry and crap. This would have looked tons better as sprites

SOUND — 70
Slightly ropy remixes of familiar Mario tunes and meaty whumps as you clobber the ball

GAMEPLAY — 91
Massive amount of swing control, a beguiling story, various original play modes

LASTING APPEAL — 92
Massive story, and you'll get addicted to levelling up your golfer. Multiplayer's great

Slow to start, but then it ENGOLFS you. You play it on the train, and you play it when you get home. You miss Big Brother, and you couldn't give a toss.

OVERALL SCORE: 88

HOW IT COMPARES: TIGER WOODS 2004 · MARIO GOLF ADVANCE TOUR · MARIO GOLF TOADSTOOL TOUR

LINK-UP LINKS

Connectivity features are minimal. You can move your GBA golfer over for a few rounds on Cube, but the USA cart won't play ball with the already released UK GC game. We checked.

If you do have both the US GBA and GameCube import versions, you can swap characters between the two versions, including Ella and Neil, the two twits from the GBA Story mode.

■ Normally on Cube you play as a character from a Mario game

■ On GBA you can develop a generic character like this lil' lady

■ Connect your US GBA to a US Cube and import your custom bod

RELEASE DATE
OUT NOW

GAME INFO
IMPORT COST: £30
PLAYERS: 1

CONTACT INFO
* PUB: CAPCOM
* DEV: ATOMIC PLANET
* WWW.CAPCOM.COM

The expression on Mega's face permanently screams "HOLY SHIT!"

At the last moment, Mega Man bottled the vasectomy

MEGA MAN ANNIVERSARY COLLECTION

15 years old, and Capcom's mini hero gets this instead of a party

To be honest, we question the mega-ness of Mega Man. He's supposed to be saving the world from an evil doctor and his shit-scary legions of robots, and yet he can't shoot upwards or duck.

Instead of addressing these issues in between games, Capcom gave him the ability to slide along the ground. Great. Oh, and a pet dog. A PET DOG?!

That's what you're up against here. Level after level of the most fiendish run and gun action ever conceived, and a hero only marginally more agile than Timmy out of South Park. This disc serves up eight Mega Man games: the first six NES games you'd need to be an expert to tell apart, then a SNES and a PlayStation excursion. Oh, and a couple of 'rare' arcade games as well.

PREVIOUS GAMES

■ They're all here

HARD FACTS

■ 10 games on one disc
Mega Mans 1 through 6 have remixed music
■ All-new Navi mode
■ 30 minutes of Mega Man anime

DID YOU KNOW?

■ The games on this disc aren't running on emulator, they've been re-coded for PS2. This means they run smoother. But somehow, Mega Man 1 occupies 500 megabytes on the disc, despite the original NES game being a fraction of one megabyte. WTF?!

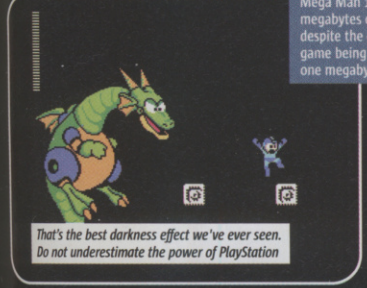
TIME TO DIE

Is it worth it? Definitely. There's no difficulty curve. No breaking you in gently. From the very first screen of Mega Man 1, Dr Wily's hordes are intent on giving you hell. You will die, and the next time you might get an inch further in and then die again. Some rooms have platforms flickering on and off above a deadly spike pit, and only split-second pixel-perfect jumping perfection can save your skin.

You'll hate dying over and over again, but you won't be able to stop yourself coming back. You have to be note-perfect to get through, and it's massively rewarding when you do succeed.

CUBE OR PS2?

Import gaming is easier on Cube, but it has a weird button layout where fire is jump and vice-versa. You also miss out 30 minutes of MM anime



That's the best darkness effect we've ever seen. Do not underestimate the power of PlayStation

This is either a boss fight or some kind of crazy space disco

"YOU'LL HATE DYING OVER AND OVER AGAIN. BUT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO STOP YOURSELF COMING BACK"

Football fever comes to Mega Man Land. Boot the ball at the toy crab thing. WALL

Big space snakes in Mega Man 3. That's what you need isn't it?

Mega Man, rolling in his convertible with one of his hot beeyatches

There's Dr Wily. He's one L short of being Dr Willy, so he got lucky on that score

SKILLS PAY THE BILLS

When you take down a boss, it really gets interesting. Slay Cutman (him with the scissors on his head) and you'll get to chuck blades around just like he did. You assimilate the power. Imagine the fun you'll have being Frogman, Woodman and Fannyman. Hang on, we could have mis-read that last one.

Capcom has basically ported each of these games exactly from the original code, only tapping into the enhanced drawing power of the host machine to eliminate a bit of slow-down. You can't be into games and not have played a Mega Man title, and there's more blue bomber here that you'll ever need. We've seen websites that'll ship this to you for under £20. How can you refuse? ✳

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 8
The NES graphics are sweet, but shit. The newer games are slightly better

SOUND — 9
Super-memorable old school chip ditties, and respectful remixes

GAMEPLAY — 8
You have to feel it in your bones. You have to want to jump and shoot people

LASTING APPEAL — 9
Eight of the hardest games ever? It took people YEARS to beat these first time round

He may be a bit retarded, but we have a soft spot for Mega Man action. Playing these again made us feel like superheroes and had us headbutting walls

OVERALL SCORE 82

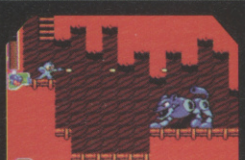
HOW IT COMPARES
ASTRO BOY (GBA)
MM ANNIV COLLECTION
MEGA MAN BN3 (GBA)

LANGUAGE BARRIER: It's in English. If that's a problem, switch off the PS2 and go to school, you idiot

HELP ME, MUMMY

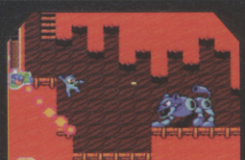
Mega Man is hard as nails. You're going to die constantly. One way to avoid this is to switch on all the all-new Navi mode.

As well as getting a snazzy new power bar, you also get question mark icons flicking up from time to time. You hit pause, and there's advice on hand on getting through that section. The hints can be a little bit on the subtle side, though.



■ The fire spitting dog totally bollocked us first time through. Let's see what advice the game has.

■ We're advised there is safe spot to pop him from, and if we're not in that place we're a sitting duck



■ So we're on this ledge. Jump the flame, respond with a volley of laser. Repeat until the dog is dead

RELEASE DATE: OUT NOW

GAME INFO: IMPORT COST: £60 PLAYERS: 1-4

CONTACT INFO: PUB: NINTENDO DEV: NINTENDO WWW.ZELDA.COM

THE LEGEND OF ZELDA FOUR SWORDS ADVENTURES

Classic themes keep our hero fighting fit

CVG GOLD AWARD

It's unlikely that three of your mates will play through the whole adventure with you

At the end of each location you encounter elemental wizard Vaati in one of his guises

We almost didn't buy the US version of Four Swords Adventures, having already played the Japanese one. However, we're glad to have had second thoughts because this game really comes alive once you can appreciate the dialogue.

Though it's dazzling to play through four GBAs connected to GameCube, each with its own window on Hyrule, characterisation still shines bright in this quest.

PROBLEMS, PROBLEMS

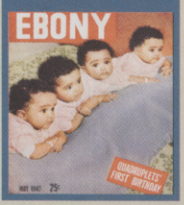
A positive thing about Nintendo games is that natural curiosity goes a long way in problem solving, with little need for specific clues. Although Zelda games are dubbed RPGs, they're really giant puzzles requiring lateral thinking to progress.

We've ploughed through countless games using common sense and a little guesswork, without appreciating or even noticing some of the games' finer points. You can even chug through something as complex as Final Fantasy if you put your mind to it. That said, the action side of things gives us a lot of things to like in any Zelda game, but having played through the US version of Four Swords we realise the clever dialogue gives us more to love.

PREVIOUS GAMES
- Legend Of Zelda I, II and III, LOZ: Ocarina Of Time, LOZ: The Wind Waker

HARD FACTS
- Four players at once
- Seven worlds to conquer
- 42 million Zelda games sold worldwide

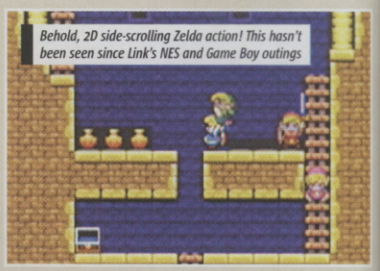
DID YOU KNOW?
- Only eight per cent of all sets of quadruplets have identical babies in them.



WAY WITH WORDS

Feeling at home with the language takes the pressure off every situation. There is a clear difference between areas you're supposed to figure out for yourself, the straightforward physical puzzles, and those that are intended to be more cryptic.

When you need a hint, they're rapid-fire and witty: "I'm cut in half, that's why I look so weird", being one example. It makes you laugh, but it's also clear what's needed! Often we set ourselves the challenge of defeating a game, rather than truly enjoying it – games to tick off our To Do list. But Four Swords proves that smart dialogue adds life to the experience.



Behold, 2D side-scrolling Zelda action! This hasn't been seen since Link's NES and Game Boy outings

PICK YOURSELF UP

Four Swords is more action-oriented than other Zelda games, with each new level treated as a self-contained chapter.

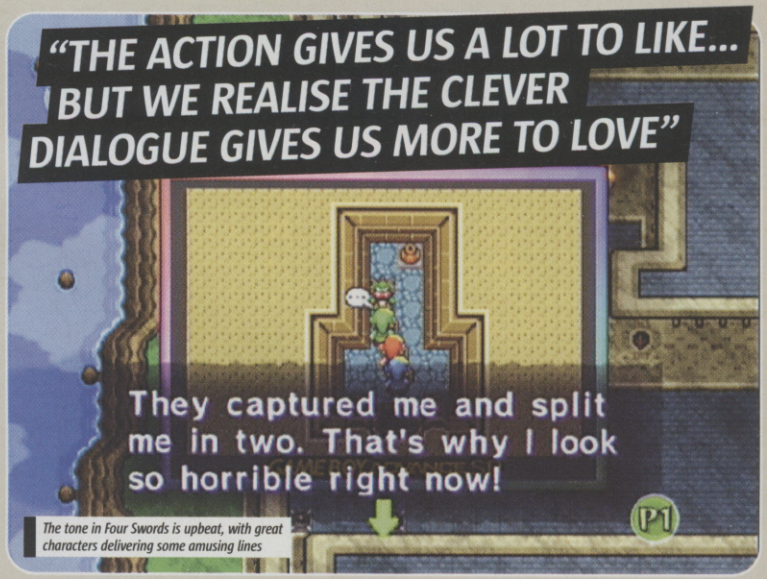
Link's abilities are reset from the beginning of each level, so he must search anew for heart containers, secondary weapons, and enough Force Gems to power up his sword to tackle what's waiting at the end of the mini-quest.

1 Power up Link's Slingshot to fire three Deku nuts at once – handy for lots of enemies

2 After Link collects 2000 Force Gems his sword becomes empowered to deflect evil

3 Avoid getting hit in between killing each enemy, to create combos for more Force Gems

4 Visit the fairy in her cave, inside your GBA, to have her increase your weapon's power



The tone in Four Swords is upbeat, with great characters delivering some amusing lines

Align the four links in one of four set patterns to gain the extra power needed here

A shadow version of Link drops bombs that are so big, you need to run for cover

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS 92
Souped-up GBA visuals might seem cheapskate but the style works well

SOUND 78
Them tunes you've heard before, but they're classic, as are the sound effects

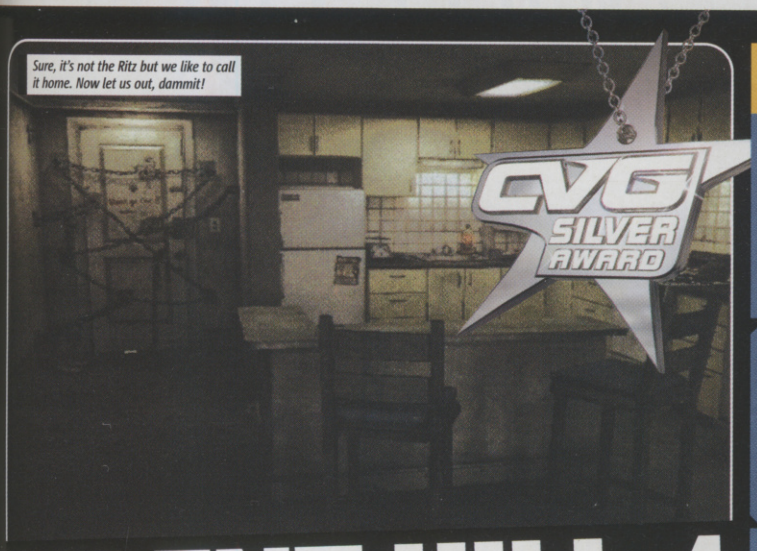
GAMEPLAY 92
Fast-paced, constant, and ingenious problem solving using the four Links

LASTING APPEAL 90
Shelve it once you're through with the adventure – mini games aren't the greatest

You might not appreciate the retro looks, but this four-player Zelda keeps your brain bouncing along from puzzle to battle and back again – perfectly

OVERALL SCORE 92

HOW IT COMPARES
- LOZ: OCARINA OF TIME
- LOZ: FOUR SWORDS ADV.
- LOZ: THE WIND WAKER



Sure, it's not the Ritz but we like to call it home. Now let us out, dammit!

SILENT HILL 4 THE ROOM

Still a scream, or over the hill?

Silent Hill's come in for a clobbering since it hit the PS2 – mainly for its refusal to tamper with the formula that's proved such a shuddering success.

This time though, it's all change in Fog Central – we've a brand new protagonist and the horrible Resident Evil-style controls have been scrapped in favour of a system that happily waltzes you in any direction you shove the stick. The clumsy menu-based inventory has gone too – weapons and items switching all happens in real-time, although you're limited in the amount you can carry.

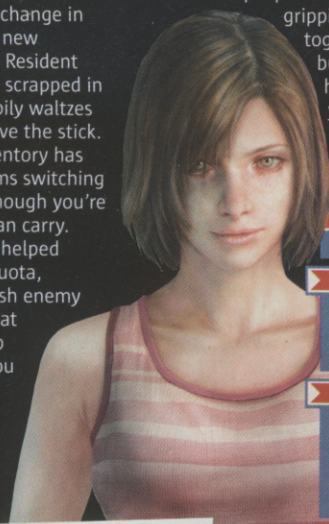
All this streamlining has helped ramp up the frantic action quota, especially now that the hellish enemy abominations scream about at a frightening lick, refusing to stay dead no matter what you chuck at them.

The much-touted first-person mode is less of a revelation though, and is reserved for scouting out your apartment between areas. There's no combat, but you probe the festering contents of your inescapable home and slowly unravel the mystery behind your incarceration.

Snooping on your neighbours through windows and peep-holes is genuinely gripping as you put together the pieces, but the real fun happens whenever you hit the trail back to Silent Hill.

Despite the facelift, the core gameplay of the series still remains the same – you'll bludgeon monsters, solve obscure puzzles and cack your pants on a regular basis.

Konami's changes are welcome, laying the most annoying game elements to rest, but they won't win over any Hill-haters. Fans have everything to fear though – the Hill hasn't lost its power to disturb and unsettle, even fourth time around. ✳



PREVIOUS GAMES
- Silent Hill 1, 2 and 3

HARD FACTS
- Slick new controls
- Real-time inventory
- First-person sections
- Explore fresh locations

DID YOU KNOW?
- Import fans owe Konami big-time here – not only does the Jap game feature full English voice-acting, all the in-game text is available in English too!

"THE ALL-NEW HELLISH ABOMINATIONS SCREAM ABOUT AT A FRIGHTENING LICK"

The way these rotting bodies drift along the ground is just WRONG. They won't die either!

TUNNEL VISION

The major gameplay change in SH4 is the introduction of your inescapable apartment.

Unlike previous games, you'll need to return frequently to this hub area to solve puzzles, switch your inventory and even restore health. While your front door's chained shut, the arrival of a mysterious hole in your bathroom wall means you can visit locations in Silent Hill and return via tunnels dotted around town.

1 ■ Dodgy grouting or a terrifying portal to another world? This way to Silent Hill, folks!

2 ■ You'll find loads of these tunnels to clamber through in town – all leading back to your bathroom

MATT

CVG VERDICT

GRAPHICS — 93
Filthy, nasty and relentlessly unpleasant but the realism and detail is astounding

SOUND — 94
A familiar mix of unnerving industrial white noise and gorgeous music, but slick as ever

GAMEPLAY — 88
Classic Silent Hill stuff with enough fresh twists to send fans straight to Seventh Hell

LASTING APPEAL — 81
Once you've cracked it, you'll probably only go back if you're a complete masochist

Essentially more of the same, but with the most frustrating gameplay niggles gone, you can sit back and soak up the terror like never before

OVERALL SCORE 87

HOW IT COMPARES
- PROJECT ZERO 2
- SILENT HILL 4: THE ROOM
- SILENT HILL 3

JAPANESE RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
29.7	Djbox	SCE
	F-Fanatic	Princess Soft
	ONE PIECE Land! Land!	Bandai
	Solved! Osabakina	Kid
	Sunbeam Avenue: Change Of Season	GN Software
	Tokyo Demon School Legend	Marvellous Interactive
	Summer Girl Promised Summer	Success
	Yu-Gi-Oh! Capsule Monster Colosseum	Konami
	Yu-Gi-Oh! Duel Monsters II	Konami
	I Love Baseball	Sammy
	Guilty Gear Isuka	Sammy
	Samurai Spirits Zero	SNK Playmore
	The Nightmare Of Druaga	Arika
	Digimon Battle Chronicle	Bandai
	Patiche First Love Tastes Like Strawberry	Peony Soft
	Rockman X Command Mission	Capcom
5.8	Darling Special Backlash	D3 Publisher
	EA Sports Fight Night	EA
	SOCOM II: Navy Seals	SCE
	XIII Man Who Killed President	Marvellous Interactive
	Singing Tambourine Dice	Reindeer
	Rapid Reload Gunlock	Bandai
	Kusu Kusu Dog's Luck	Hamster
	Tokyo Met Police Strange Files	Japan Software
	Starman Panic Maker	Capcom
	Aqua Kids	Yukes
	Ape Escape Eye Toy	SCE
	World Soccer Winning Eleven 8	Konami
12.8	KOF Maximum Impact	Playmore

XBOX

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
29.7	Dynasty Warriors	KOEI
	Grand Theft Auto Double Pack	Capcom
	Digimon Battle Chronicle	Bandai

GAMECUBE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
29.7	Cyber Formula Road To The Evolution	Sunrise Interactive
	Digimon Battle Chronicle	Bandai
	Rockman X Command Mission	Capcom

GBA

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
29.7	Hyaku Hanabi Advance	Arute
	Power Pro Ken Pocket 1.2	Konami
	Final Fantasy I,II Advance	Square Enix
	Legends: Island Of Ordeal	Bandai
5.8	Battle Beaderman Burn!	Atlus
	SD Gundman Force	Bandai
	Legend Of Starfy 3	Nintendo
	Animal Hospital	TDK Core
	Ultra Guard Monster Attack	Rocket Company
	Rockman X 4.5 Real Operation	Capcom

AMERICAN RELEASE DATES

PLAYSTATION 2

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
3.8	King of Fighter 2003	SNK Playmore
	Funkmaster Flex's Digital Hitz Factory	XS Games
4.8	Castle Of Shikigami II	XS Games
9.8	Madden NFL 2005	EA
10.8	ESPN NFL 2K5	Sega
	Growlanser Generations	Working Designs
16.8	Street Fighter Anniversary Collection	Capcom
	Carmen Sandiego: The Secret Of The Stolen Drums	BAM! Entertainment
17.8	Armoured Core: Nexus	From Software
	Astro Boy	Sega
	Digimon Rumble Arena 2	Bandai
	Ghosthunter	Namco
	Hot Shots Golf Fore!	SCE
23.8	Hydro Rush	Midway
24.8	Headhunter: Redemption	Sega
	NHL 2005	EA
	ShellShock: Nam '67	Eidos Interactive
	Terminator 3: The Redemption	Atari

XBOX

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
2.8	Hunting	Metro 3D
3.8	Tom Clancy's Rainbow Six 3: Black Arrow	Ubisoft
9.8	Madden NFL 2005	EA
10.8	ESPN NFL 2K5	Sega
16.9	Syberia II	XS Games
17.8	Pro Fishing Challenge	Atlus
23.8	Digimon Rumble Arena 2	Bandai
24.8	Digimon World 4	Bandai
	ShellShock: Nam '67	Eidos Interactive
	Terminator 3: The Redemption	Atari

GAMECUBE

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
9.8	Madden NFL 2005	EA
17.8	Carmen Sandiego: The Secret of the Stolen Drums	BAM! Entertainment
23.8	Digimon Rumble Arena 2	Bandai
24.8	Amazing Island	Sega
	Digimon World 4	Bandai
	Terminator 3: The Redemption	Atari

GBA

DATE	GAME	PUBLISHER
5.8	Kim Possible 2: Drakken's Demise	Disney Interactive
9.8	Madden NFL 2005	EA
	Def Jam: Fight For NY	EA
10.8	Gundam Seed: Battle Assault	Bandai
17.8	Astro Boy: Omega Factor	Sega
	Metal Slug Advance	SNK Neo-Geo
24.8	Digimon Racing	Bandai

LOOK OUT NEXT MONTH: ROUTE ONE TO JOY!

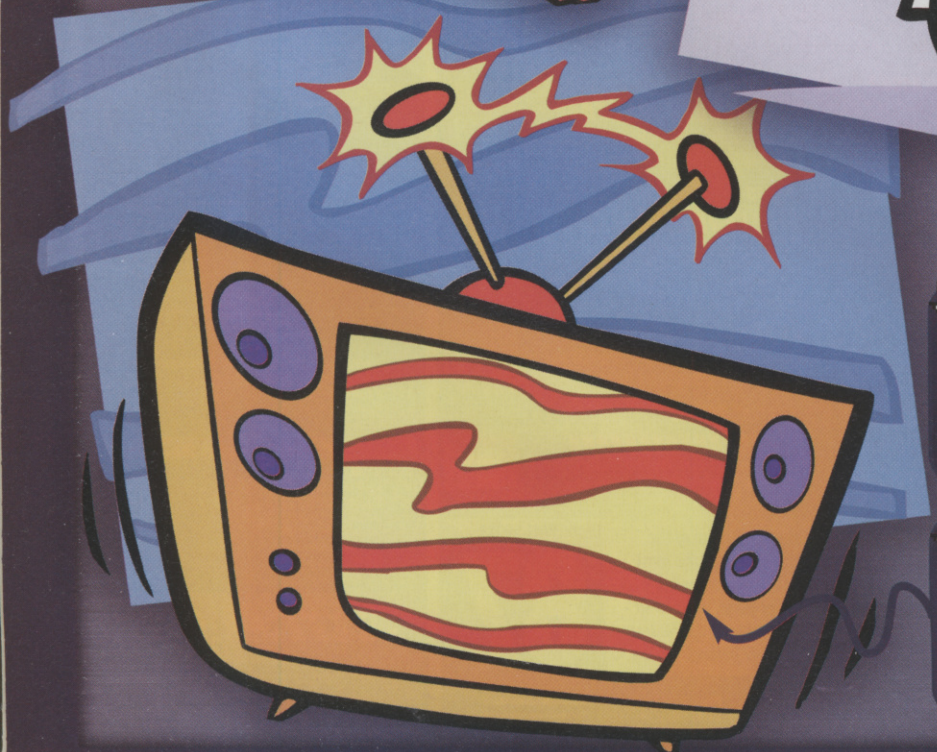
Only one import game on our mind next month, and that's Winning Eleven 8. If we're forced to consider anything else, it'll probably be Rockman Command Mission and Dynasty Warriors on Xbox. Any games on this list you'd like to get a mention, drop us a line.

LOG ON AND LOAD UP

Still hungry for more, even after thumbing through this game-packed issue of CVG? Logging onto **ComputerAndVideogames.com** will satisfy the biggest gaming appetites

HOTTEST GAMING NEWS

ComputerAndVideogames.com is Europe's leading online news service covering games on a global scale. Any self-respecting games fan simply cannot afford to miss the latest developments on PS2, Xbox, Game Boy Advance, GameCube and PC from around the world. There's only one place to keep up and that's here. CVG's news is an essential part of your daily routine.



ESSENTIAL TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

CheatStation is one of the biggest sources of gaming tips, cheats and guides on the Internet, supplying 37,558 cheats for 8877 games on 40 formats. Features such as being able to vote on any cheat make ComputerAndVideogames.com's service the best in the world. There's absolutely no need to go anywhere else.

KILLER COMPETITIONS

Fact: the best online competition prizes around are to be found on ComputerAndVideogames.com. Consoles, games, TVs and everything else you could ever need to make your gaming life a luxury fly out of our hands faster than you can say, "I need free stuff". Don't be a mug: you've got to be in it to win it.

ON INFO!

IT'S GOOD TO TALK

There's no better place on the Web to meet like-minded people than on our forums. Feel the need to spout on about your passion? We have bulletin boards for PS2, Xbox, GameCube, Game Boy Advance, PC, Mac, PSone, Dreamcast, N64, music and film, cheats, our online ranking service CSports.net and a general place to talk games. Join the party right now!

FIND THE GAME YOU WANT

Our site is fit to burst with an enormous amount of archived news, reviews, previews, features, cheats and downloads. Looking for some screenshots? We have thousands of them. And using our simple navigation, finding exactly what you want on any format couldn't be simpler: allow us to take the pain of searching out your gaming addiction!

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COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

Big 50!

Only the best and biggest games make it into our Big 50. Don't fancy any of this month's reviews? One of these'll please you – guaranteed!

HALO 95%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Microsoft ■ £19.99

Take a movie style sci-fi plot, tons of crazy-looking enemies and mint vehicles, great controls, fekking ace set-pieces, lush graphics and superb co-op, add some seriously sweaty and intense fighting – then ram it all down the muzzle of your Xbox, stick it in your face and pull the trigger. Boom! That's how you'll feel when your quivering hands finally drop the pad. Oh, not bad on PC either.

007 EVERYTHING OR NOTHING 83%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

EA must love pain, 'cos every year it does a Bond game and every year someone disses it for not being as good as GoldenEye. Same this year, only it really isn't that far off. No, honestly.

ADVANCE WARS 2: BLACK HOLE RISING 91%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Proof that strategy games aren't for speccy twats called DarthMaul897364. Advance Wars 2 is addictive, challenging and... uh-oh, the F word... fun!

BOKTAI 85%

■ GBA ■ Konami ■ £29.99

Innovative vamp-twatter weaving a light-sensitive gizmo on your GBA cart into the gameplay. Meaning you'll need to play it OUTDOORS. Gasp! No!

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Acclaim ■ £19.99 - 39.99

For people that love driving VERY FAST, this is a gift from the gods. No-frills, balls-out, unadulterated arcade racing with wicked pile-ups. Still ace a year on.

CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER 03-04 84%

■ PC ■ Eidos ■ £29.99

With less bugs and updated player stats, say goodbye both to soap and the real world, and embrace the crack-like phenomenon that is Champ Man. Ugly as a Southgate/Rooney lovechild, mind.

CIVILIZATION III 90%

■ PC ■ Atari ■ £9.99 (Conquest add-on £19.99)

Better than history lessons taught by a page 3 girl, re-write history as it should've been – with YOU in charge. Strategy-wise, it's as deep as it gets.

DISGAEA 88%

■ PS2 ■ Koei ■ £39.99

Ugly and grim sounding yet incredibly well endowed in the gameplay department, this is to console strategy games what Wayne Rooney is to footie.

FAR CRY 91%

■ PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £34.99

Best PC shooter for one-player right now, the lush tropical settings are a real holiday from the usual clichéd blood-spattered gothic settings.

FIGHT NIGHT 2004 89%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ EA ■ £39.99

We expect polished, big licence games from EA, but analog stick punch control is a revelation that'll get more ripped off than a Yank tourist in Soho.

FINAL FANTASY X 88%

■ PS2 ■ Sony ■ £19.99

The first FF for PS2 was a Choco-fanciers wet-dream. Massive and absorbing, the purer levelling up and skills system kicks over-drives up X-2's ass.

FIRE EMBLEM 85%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

When battle strategy and role-playing meet, you know the unholy bastard hellspawn of Beelzebub is so addictive it's going to take over your waking life.

FULL SPECTRUM WARRIOR 92%

■ Xbox ■ THQ ■ £39.99

Soldiering sim that's more real-time strategiser than squad-based shooter. Intense, rewarding and wicked-looking.

F-ZERO GP LEGEND 91%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Old skool looks hide heart-pumpingly tight racing action, complete with new ship tuning and Story Mode options. A real pocket rocket must-have.

F-ZERO GX 91%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Frantically fast futuristic racer that proves Cube packs some processing punch. It won't make that carry-handle look any less stupid though.

GALLEON 92%

■ Xbox ■ SCi ■ £39.99

Unmissable adventure classic that took a billion years to make. Neat game engine, mental levels, crafty puzzles and class voice acting? Whoop!

MARIO KART: DOUBLE DASH!! 86%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Closer to the N64 than the beloved SNES version, DD tries to be a crowd-pleaser but some players hate its kiddier karts and stretched-out tracks.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: DOUBLE PACK 95%

■ Xbox, PS2 ■ Rockstar ■ £39.99

Take two bottles into the shower? Not any more 'cos GTA III and sequel Vice City is now double-packed. Like giving grenades to an angry gorilla and telling him to go play nicely with the monkeys, GTA lets you loose in a concrete jungle where anything goes, so long as it's on the wrong side of the law. They'll still be talking about these two in ten years time.

MASHED 81%

■ Xbox, PS2, PC ■ Empire ■ £39.99

Another fuel injection up your tailpipe from the creative minds behind Micro Machines 2 and Circuit Breakers. Of course, the multiplayer is a blast (especially as knocked-out players can try to nuke remaining cars), but this time out single-player is a good crack too – thanks to rival cars' AI being pitched just right to remain competitive. Plus the manic racing is spiced up with other objectives like capturing runaway rivals and beating the clock to get past checkpoints before the car explodes. Hardly revolutionary overall, but addictive nonetheless.

MARIO SUNSHINE 92%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Reinvented platform action thanks to the Ron Jeremy look-alike's new backpack. More magical moments than David Blaine's shazam hands.

METROID PRIME 93%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £19.99

Classic platformer melded with first-person shooter into a totally unique-feeling actioner that's perfectly paced, heavily atmospheric and hard!

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE 81%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Sons Of Liberty gets a remix. Now with more Snake and less of that albino fop. Makes you wonder why they didn't do it right the first time. Helped define the stealth genre, but the plot is quite nuts.

METAL GEAR SOLID: TWIN SNAKES 89%

■ GC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Snake has snuffed Sons Of Liberty, stolen it's clothes and stuffed the limp corpse of its plot into a foot-locker, time-warping back to his PSone classic.

NBA STREET 2 83%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA Sports ■ £39.99

Basketball goes back to the street... again. Fast, funky, full of neat tricks and fantastic commentary, Street 2 really does capture the feel of the sport perfectly.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

A blinding racer for anyone that loves attaching spinning rims and kitting their motor out with a booming sound system. Everyone, then!

UEFA EURO 2004 79%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC ■ EA ■ £39.99

Okay, so THAT penalty shoot-out instantly wiped out half the appeal, but it's so official, so slick and so stylishly smooth, it's a strangely seductive experience. Sure, it's really just a tweaked version of FIFA 2004, which is a more complete game, but hey, you've got to love Euro 2004 for letting you re-write history. Right the wrong of that disallowed goal to send Portugal crashing out at the quarter finals? Yes! Plus there are no referees making decisions that stink like ten-year-old Swiss cheese fresh from a yodelling goat's bottom.

YOUR CHANCE TO MAKE SWISS CHEESE OUT OF THE FARCE THAT WAS THE REAL EURO 2004

NINJA GAIDEN 93%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Vast and constantly surprising hack 'em up that's longer and harder than an XL concrete condom. No-skillz gamers need not apply.

ONIMUSHA 3 93%

■ PS2 ■ Capcom ■ £39.99

Stunning visuals, atmospheric score, slick new features, time-bending plot and old Jean Reno himself make this a bloody cut above 1 & 2.

POKEMON COLOSSEUM 90%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Half the planet's gamers want to see the little critters crucified then skinned alive, but the rest will love the new mix of scrapping and adventuring.

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME 89%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Ace platformer that likes to get all Craig David with a fancy "Can I get a rewind?" time-travel feature.Looks luverly, but a bit short and buggy too.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3 95%

■ PS2, PC ■ Konami ■ £39.99

Best football game on the planet. What more do you want us to say? Oh yeah... no real players. Well, we've all gotta have some dreams, right?

PROJECT GOTHAM RACING 2 93%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Street racing thrills in sumptuous looking cities with awesome Xbox Live support too. Bit of a slow-burner till you've got some cool cars.

RAINBOW SIX 3 84%

■ PS2, Xbox ■ UbiSoft ■ £39.99

Great squad-based tactical shooter that feels more realistic than other games in this arena. You'll look a twat wearing that headset to talk to people though. PS2's outing is the weakest, too.

RALLISPORT CHALLENGE 2 90%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

Forget the boring techie shite, the emphasis here is on getting behind the wheel and enjoying belting along bumpy roads at insane speeds.

RED DEAD REVOLVER 85%

■ Xbox, PS2 ■ Sony ■ £39.99

Rockstar lays on the style and does the impossible – making a decent game set in the Wild West. Original ideas with fresh and fast action. And... draw!

SOULCALIBUR 2 88%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA/Nintendo ■ £39.99

Looks great but weak AI makes one-player too easy and the fighting system just isn't deep enough to last in multiplayer. We prefer Virtua Fighter.

SSX 3 85%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ EA ■ £39.99

The ultimate boarding thrill-ride, SSX 3 is more open-ended as you wrack up the points exploring three huge mountains looking for the phattest air.

STAR WARS: KOTOR 88%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Activision ■ £39.99

Star Wars gets a AAA game, with cool weapons and skills plus a genius fighting system. More fun than waxing a wookie – but just as beardy.

THIEF 3 89%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Eidos ■ £39.99

Medieval sneakage for anyone sick of the usual hi-tech terrorism settings. Simple game mechanics hide great freedom and depth.

SPLINTER CELL PANDORA TOMORROW 94%

■ PS2, Xbox, PC, GBA ■ Ubisoft ■ £39.99

Sam Fisher slaps on his night perving goggles and pokes his optic cable into loads more crevices in this stealth sequel masterpiece. Multiplayer is GENIUS.

IT'S FINALLY OUT ON PS2 AND IS EVERY BIT THE STEALTH CLASSIC IT IS ON XBOX

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 89%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube, PC ■ EA Sports ■ £39.99

Someone should have told Siegfried and Roy that there are easier ways to tame a tiger. This is the Gran Turismo of golf games – it's that good!

TIMESPLITTERS 2 91%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Eidos ■ £19.99

Comedy time-travelling shooter with great levels and wicked multiplayer modes. If you loved GoldenEye on N64, snap this up.

TOCA RACE DRIVER 2 91%

■ Xbox, PC ■ Codemasters ■ £39.99

So many different types of racing in one perfectly polished package that feel genuinely different and all genuinely good. A real must-have.

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND 79%

■ PS2, Xbox, GameCube ■ Activision ■ £39.99

The weakest game in the series, but Tony's still the chairman of the board when it comes to skating on your console. Made us wish Jackass' Bam Margera would do his own videogame.

TOP SPIN 83%

■ Xbox ■ Microsoft ■ £39.99

"Anyone that says Virtua Tennis is better cannot be serious. Wedge a racket up their ass and make them play this, that'll learn 'em real good". A direct quote from CVG's Grazza, no less.

VIEWTIFUL JOE 89%

■ GameCube ■ Capcom ■ £39.99

A kung-fu fighting superhero crimefighter with more Bullet Time tricks than the whole Matrix trilogy. Crazy, unique and very cool – viewtiful even!

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION 93%

■ PS2 ■ Sega ■ £39.99

Tekken 4? Parp! Virtua Fighter 4 is where the big boys play. This is the current pinnacle of 3D beat 'em ups. Just a pity Akira looks like Peter Andre.

WARIO WARE INC. 88%

■ GBA ■ Nintendo ■ £29.99

Mini-game nirvana in one of the smartest, most devious and addictive games ever. The pleasure of slicing steaks and picking noses is intense, but over too soon.

WWE SMACKDOWN! HCTP 87%

■ PS2 ■ THQ ■ £39.99

The series gets bigger and better each year and now you can play Bra and Panties matches avec the laydeez – it's the best wrestling game ever!

LEGEND OF ZELDA: THE WIND WAKER 95%

■ GameCube ■ Nintendo ■ £39.99

Absorbing graphics and captivating gameplay, mini Orlando Bloom Link will pull you in faster than Jordan's yo-yo knickers go up and down.

Do you agree with CVG? If you think there's something missing, write it and let us know.

mailbag.cvg@dennis.co.uk

NEW ENTRIES

MASHED
It's no secret Team CVG can't go one day without kicking the shite out of each other in multiplayer games. Fast and simple, this is a current fave.

EUFA EURO 2004
Soothe away the pain of England's defeat by stuffing Portugal 4-0 every day for a month. Then file it away and forget about it for four years.

TOP SPIN
After Euro 2004, Wimbledon did for national pride what a turd bandage does for festering wounds. So we're in training for next year's finals.

DROP-OUTS

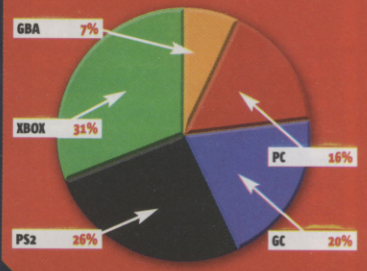
SINGSTAR
Unceremoniously dropped soon as Grazza heard his replay of I Believe In a Thing Called Love.

SMASH COURT TENNIS 2
Fun for a month, but still doesn't have Top Spin's belting online options to give it staying power.

BATTLEFIELD VIETNAM
Like hardened Nam veterans, we've seen too much time 'in country' and need some R&R.

FORMAT FACE-OFF

It took Xbox two years to bag the top format slot, and it's hanging on in there. Here's the latest breakdown...



BEST AND WORST OF THE LAST 3 MONTHS

Missed an issue of CVG and want to know what the reviews highlights and lowlights were? Here you go...

ISSUE 275

GROUND CONTROL II	
PC	85%
SHELLSHOCK NAM '67	
PS2, XBOX, PC	71%
DRIV3R	
PS2, XBOX	64%
ATHENS 2004	
PS2	61%
FORMULA ONE 2004	
PS2	51%

ISSUE 274

ONIMUSHA 3 DEMON SIEGE	
PS2	93%
PSO III	
GC	78%
.HACK: MUTATION	
PS2	76%
SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN	
PS2	72%
X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE	
PS2, XBOX	63%

ISSUE 273

NINJA GAIDEN	
XBOX	93%
GALLEON	
XBOX	92%
HITMAN: CONTRACTS	
PS2, XBOX, PC	78%
CY GIRLS	
PS2	66%
ENGLAND INTERNATIONAL FOOTBALL	
PS2, XBOX	56%

NURSE CVG'S BIG TIPS

The Surgery is open! Stop bashing away at your buttons, boys – Nurse CVG is ready to receive you!

What with all the football excitement on the telly over the last month, I've barely had chance to play around with my tips – I've had to get a lovely work experience lad called Duane in to fiddle around with them for me.

Well, can you blame me? The last time I got 22 men thrashing about and playing with their balls for me, I'd stumbled in to the wrong changing room down at the local pool. Thankfully, they were only too happy to see that I was able to get undressed, and they were most helpful with my facials.

Anyway, the surgery's open as usual and I've just walked in on little Duane working his tips up good and proper. Bless him, he's been at it hard all week – he's looking a bit flushed. This month, you can wrap your hands around my ample titbits for Driv3r, Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain and Shadow Ops: Red Mercury among others.

Don't forget to contact me as usual and I'll milk what I can from your meaty tips!

Love and giant leathery balls, Nurse CVG xxx

SHREK 2

PS2

Listen up lads! If you let your little bald-headed fella go green and reek of swamp water then I'm going to have to refer you to Nurse Gertrude. She's a right old bingo-winged biffer, but she knows her way around a cotton swab.

✷ *Level Select*
In the first level, pause and go to the Scrapbook then enter the code:
◀ ▲ ✕ ● ◀ ▲ ✕ ● ◀ ▲ ✕ ● ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲ ▲

✷ *Unlock Bonus Game*
Go to the Scrapbook then enter the code. When you're done, quit the level and select Bonus:
◀ ▲ ✕ ● ◀ ▲ ✕ ● ◀ ▲ ✕ ● ■ ● ■ ● ■ ●

SHADOW OPS: RED MERCURY

XBOX

I'm always happy to do my bit for the war effort and help our brave soldiers. If there's anyone out there with a nice big helmet, drop into my little surgery – I'll get some spit on it and buff up the dome until it glistens.

Enter these passwords in the codes menu:

✷ *Unlock all Single-Player Levels*
happycamper

✷ *Unlock All Co-op Levels*
Wanderlust

✷ *Unlock All Missions* – GOMASSIVE

SAMURAI WARRIORS

PS2

I've heard this game features hundreds of buff sweaty men all going at one another with their enormous weapons. It sounds just like a video I accidentally popped in the slot at Uncle Quentin's house once.

UNLOCKABLE CHARACTERS

✷ *Magoichi*
Complete any campaign

✷ *Masamune*
Complete any two campaigns

✷ *Goemon*
Complete Story mode for Okuni

✷ *Keichi Maeda*
Complete Story mode for Kenshin Uesugi

✷ *Kunoichi*
Complete Story mode for Hanzo Hattori and Shingen

✷ *Nobunaga Oda*
Complete Story mode for Oichi, Magoichi and Noh

✷ *Noh*
Complete Story mode for Ranmaru Mori

✷ *Okuni*
Complete Story mode for Keiji Maeda

✷ *Ranmaru Mori*
Complete Story mode for Mitsuhide Akechi

✷ *Shingen*
Complete Sanada's campaign

SPYRO AND CRASH BANDICOOT FUSION

GBA

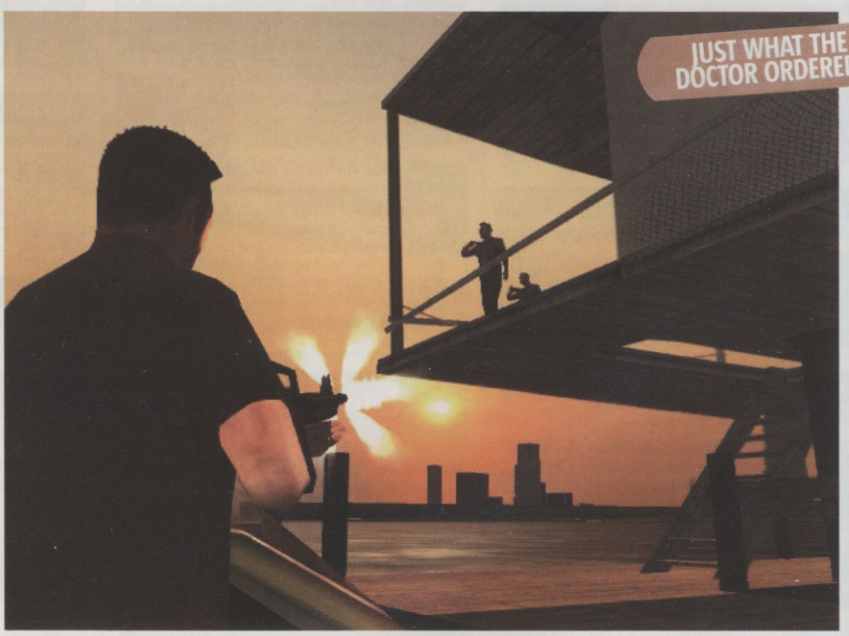
Apparently a bandicoot's a small furry thing that loves burrowing up tunnels. It's nocturnal too, so once it's up, it keeps going all night. Reminds me of a guy I used to date.

Bring up the password screen by pressing L and R together on the Game Mode menu and try out the following codes:

SPYRO CODES

✷ *Get 100 gems* – V1S10NS
✷ *Turn Spyro orange* – SPYRO
✷ *Turns game orange* – SP4RX
✷ *Turns game purple* – PORT4L
✷ *Turn enemies into sheep* – SH33P

NURSE CVG'S TIP OF THE MONTH



DRIV3R

PS2, XBOX

Oooh, I love driving, me. Nothing beats wrapping my hands around a nice firm gearstick and gently working it up and down – and if the ride starts to get a bit bumpy then I pop out my twin airbags. Anybody want a go in my backseat? Enter these at the Main Menu screen and a sound will confirm you've entered them correctly.

PS2:

✷ Unlock All Missions ..... L1 R1 L1 L2 ● ● ●
✷ Unlock All Vehicles ..... L1 L1 ● ● L1 R1 ●
✷ Unlock All Weapons ..... R1 L2 ● ● R1 R2 L2
✷ Invincibility ..... ● ● L1 R2 L2 R2 R2

XBOX:

✷ Unlock All Missions ..... X, X, Y, Y, Right Trigger, Right Trigger, Left Trigger
✷ Unlock All Vehicles ..... X, X, Y, Y, Left Trigger, Right Trigger, Left Trigger
✷ Unlock All Weapons ..... Left Trigger, Left Trigger, X, Y, Y, Right Trigger, Right Trigger
✷ Unlock Unlimited Ammo Cheat ..... Right, Right, Left, Left, X, Y, Y
✷ Invincibility ..... X, Y, Left Trigger, Right Trigger, Left Trigger, Right Trigger, Right Trigger

NURSE CVG'S GOLDEN TIPS

You know what they say: old tips never die, they just shrivel up and drop out of sight. Well, never fear! This month I've got Nurse Gertrude to root through her musty old drawers and give some of my favourite rickety snippets an airing to celebrate the budget arrival of these geriatric games!

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN

XBOX

Get a bit more bang for your buck and unlock the original Wolfenstein 3D. Simply complete Campaign mode in single-player. I don't know about you, but I can never get enough of army men putting the willies up me in the dead of night.

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND

PS2, GC

I prefer a man who takes his time.

PS2

UNLOCK ALL CIRCUIT TRACKS
↓ R1 R1 R1 R2 R2 R2 ●

UNLOCK ALL DRIFT TRACKS
← ← ← ← → R2 R1 L2

UNLOCK ALL DRAG TRACKS
→ ● ← R1 ● L1 L2 R2

UNLOCK ALL SPRINT TRACKS
↑ R2 R2 R2 R1 ↓ ↓ ↓

GC

UNLOCK ALL CIRCUIT TRACKS
Down, R, R, R, X, X, X, Z

UNLOCK ALL DRIFT TRACKS
Left, Left, Left, Left, Right, X, R, Y

ALL DRAG TRACKS
Right, Z, Left, R, Z, L, Y, X

ALL SPRINT TRACKS
Up, X, X, X, R, Down, Down, Down

PRINCE OF PERSIA: THE SANDS OF TIME

XBOX

I've always wanted to be royalty, me. What girl could resist getting her hands on a big glistening sceptre and balancing some hefty crown jewels on her forehead? For a bit of extra princely fun on the Xbox, try entering A, X, Y, B, Y, A, X, B once you're on the balcony after starting a new game. You'll unlock a 3D update of the first ever PoP level.

HUNTER: THE RECKONING

GC, XBOX

GC

If you want to get your itchy fingers on all the weapons in the game, hit Up, Down, X, Y, Y without collecting any Special weapons first. Watch it though – this little trick bumps up the difficulty level too!

XBOX

A bit of extra beef for all you Xbox blasters out there – as well as pressing B, Up, Left, Down, Right, B, B to get all those tasty shooters, try entering Down, Down, B, Y, Down, Down to make them do maximum damage.

CRASH CODES

- *Get 100 Wumpa fruit* – CR4SH
- *Get 200 Wumpa fruit* – G3CKO

SAMURAI JACK: THE SHADOW OF AKU

PS2

I never get to see Saturday morning kid's cartoons – I prefer to lie in and get my man to make breakfast in bed. You should see how flushed I get when he starts trying to fertilise my eggs instead of scrambling them.

Enter these codes during gameplay

- *Max Out and Restore Health Meter*
  Left Stick Left and Right Stick Right, ✕ △ ■ ● ✕ △ ■ ●
- *Max Out and Fill Zen Meter*
  Left Stick Left and Right Stick Right, ● ✕ ■ △
- *Crystal Sword*
  Left Stick Down and Right Stick Up, ✕ ● ■ △
- *Flame Blade*
  Left Stick Up and Right Stick Down, ■ ✕ ● △

GROUND CONTROL II: OPERATION EXODUS

PC

Some of the old dears we get in the surgery don't have much control left at ground level. I love whipping off their knickers, but not when they're all crusty and stink of piss. At least I never have that trouble – I go commando.

Hit the ~ key twice during a mission to call up the console, then enter the following

- *Unlock All Missions* – GOMASSIVE

TOP 20 TIPS

EVERY BEST-SELLER TIPPED!

1 TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

PS2, XBOX, GBA

Shooting out as many lights as possible will aid your progress through the game immensely – remember, you don't have night vision goggles for nothing!

2 HARRY POTTER AND THE PRISONER OF AZKABAN

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC, GBA

Go to the main menu in the Xbox version and press Up, Left, Down, Left, Right, Black, Black, White for invulnerability – you'll find it so much easier playing around with your wand now.

3 UEFA EURO 2004

PS2, XBOX, PC

Okay, so this little tip won't help you all at home but might be handy for our England lads: next time, if you want help staying in a tournament, pop over to the surgery and I'll show you everything I know about ball control.

4 RED DEAD REVOLVER

PS2, XBOX

Enter a space as your name when you create a new Xbox game to start with some items already purchased from the store.

5 SHREK 2

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC, GBA

Complete 70 missions to unlock the movie stills gallery and Crash Coliseum bonus.

6 DRIV3R

PS2, XBOX, PC

At the main menu on PS2, hit L1 L1 ● ● L1 R1 ● to unlock

7 THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS

XBOX, PC

A sneaky tip for penetrating all that shadowy gloom is to raise the Gamma/Brightness option for your very own virtual Nightvision goggles.

8 PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

PS2, PC

Give England a kick up the arse by entering the code '1006' in Edit mode to increase their stats by 5 points.

9 MARIO GOLF: TOADSTOOL TOUR

GC

At the title screen, hit Z and Start then enter the password 'GGAA241' to unlock the Super Mario Open tournament.

10 CHAMPIONSHIP MANAGER: SEASON 03/04

PC

Take charge of a national team by creating a game with the name 'with the nation' then select any team from the country you want to manage, click a player then his nationality. Click the bottom right of the screen to take control.

11 HITMAN: CONTRACTS

PS2, XBOX, PC

At the main menu, enter ● △ ● ← ↑ → L2 R2 to activate the Level Select.

12 THE SIMS

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC, GBA

In the PS2 version, press all the shoulder buttons at the main menu to access the cheat menu. Enter 'FREEALL' and buying objects won't cost you a single bean!

13 GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

PS2, XBOX, PC

Start a pedestrian riot by hitting Down, Left, Up, Left, X, R2, R1, L2, L1 at any time during the game.

14 SONIC HEROES

PS2, XBOX, GC

On the Xbox, hold A and Y after you select a level in two-player mode to make your characters metallic.

15 SINGSTAR

PS2

Remember, just because you CAN sing doesn't mean you SHOULD – especially relevant if your name features the words 'Rik' or 'Waller'.

16 FIFA 2004

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC, GBA

Reach Level 40 in your EA Bio on the Xbox to unlock the third kit for teams in the English Premiership and German Dundesliga.

17 GT4: PROLOGUE SIGNATURE EDITION

PS2

Here's a handy tip for this GTA4 teaser – save your dosh and wait for the full game to arrive. Just because I've seen a few money shots in my time doesn't mean I'm loaded.

18 TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC

Unlock all the PS2 missions for Custom Missions mode by entering L1 R2 L2 R1 ← → ● ●

19 VAN HELSING

PS2, XBOX, GBA

Beat the game, finishing each level with your hat on, to get your dirty mitts on the rifle.

20 TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004

PS2, XBOX, GC, PC, GBA

Unlock all the courses in the game by entering 'ALLTHETRACKS' in the Passwords menu

DROP EVERYTHING AND WHIP OUT YOUR TIPS FOR NURSEY!

You've all managed to keep me on the edge of ecstasy this month with your impressive tips vibrating away in my groin region – my poor little phone's fit to burst!

I really am unquenchable when it comes to receiving the biggest and best of your juicy morsels in my accommodating inbox too, so keep those meaty messages flooding. I can barely contain myself when I see one's arrived – I can't wait to open it up and take a long, hard look. I've probed every last inch of my stash this issue to tease out some mighty fine information on The Chronicles Of Riddick, Psi-Ops and Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow. Keep it up!

THE CHRONICLES OF RIDDICK: ESCAPE FROM BUTCHER BAY

XBOX

Not to brag or anything, but I've had the import version of this for a while now. There's a whole bunch of cool stuff you can unlock if you find all the Smokes scattered around the levels – these are some of my favourites so far:

- *Combo Trailer*
  Hunt out the Hogdahl's Finest brand in The Dream level
- *Movie Teaser*
  Find the Sensei in the Feed Ward level
- *Starbreeze Tech Demo*
  Get the Greas in the Hunting Dock level
- *Riddick Novelisation*
  Get the Mount Noir in the Pit level

Craig, via email

CVG *Now being a health representative, I'm not usually one to condone smoking but these tips are pretty hot. Doesn't mean I'm gonna start on the cancer sticks though – I can think of much better things to pop in my mouth and suck on slowly...*

SPYRO AND CRASH BANDICOOT FUSION

GBA

There's a couple of groovy little secrets hidden away in this pair of pocket playthings. In either game, hit the L and R buttons when you turn on your GBA to watch the little fellas throwin' some shapes and bustin' some moves. Aww, cute.

Rachel, Kent

CVG *Talking of Spyro reminds me – if you're having problems with your big, purple lizard going scaly, we've got some special cream at the surgery.*

BOKTAI: THE SUN IS IN YOUR HAND

GBA

Okay, so I've been making use of all the sweltering sun we've been getting recently to crack on with Boktai on GBA. Here are a couple of extra useful gadgets you can get in the game by meeting certain conditions:

- *Dark Lens*
  Beat the game once
- *Phantom Frame*
  Beat the game twice
- *Chaos Battery*
  Finish the game on hard difficulty
- *Astro Battery*
  As evening starts turning to night, look at the Pink Solar Tree
- *Sound test*
  Collect all 30 silver coins

Jack, via text

CVG *Thanks for the info Jack, but be careful going solo in the sun. I've had plenty of boys in the surgery these last few weeks who've played around by themselves so much, they've got great big blisters all over their tips.*

GROUND CONTROL II: OPERATION EXODUS

PC

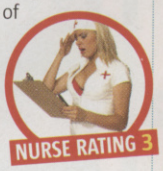
If you want to thrash the enemy team to a pulp without even breaking a sweat, then you can try out this sweet code for Ground Control II on the PC. Hit the ~ key twice to bring up the console while you're playing, then enter the word 'GODMASSIVE' to make all your units invincible – it's wicked!

Hamish, Bognor

CVG *We've had a couple of invincible units at the surgery this month – turns out someone's been slipping Viagra into the water supply again.*

DONKEY KONG COUNTRY 2

GBA



I've been tinkering around with Donkey Kong Country 2 on GBA and thought you might like the following scraps of info: You can enter the secret Lost World levels by visiting the Klubba's Kiosk areas that appear once you've completed the first world. You'll gain access to the hidden bits by building up your stash of Kremcoins dotted around the game.

- *Jungle Jinx*
  Hand over 15 coins at Crocodile Cauldron
- *Black Ice Battle*
  Hand over 15 coins at Krem Quay
- *Animal Antics level*
  Hand over 15 coins at K. Rool Keep
- *Fiery Furnace*
  Hand over 15 coins at Gloomy Gulch
- *Klobber Karnage*
  Hand over 15 coins at Krazy Kremland
- *Krocodile Core Boss*
  Win the game with all Lost World levels

Jason, Aberdeen

CVG *Whoever said that playing around with your little pocket monkey all weekend wasn't productive got it wrong... If you can squeeze out any more juicy morsels Jason, then I'm your gal!*

LIFE SAVER

PSI-OPS: THE MINDGATE CONSPIRACY

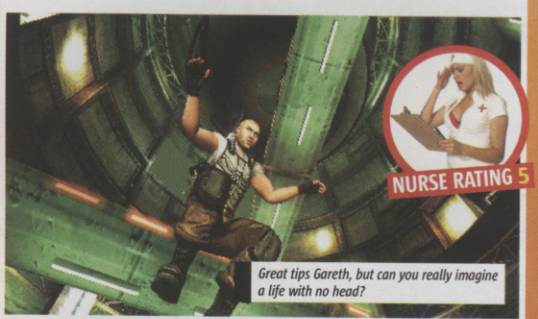
PS2

I might be jumping the gun, but here's some wicked little codes I found in the import version of Psi-Ops. You'll need to scroll down to 'Extra Content' in the main menu and squeeze R1 to bring up the keypad to enter the following:

CHEAT	CODE
Take Less Damage	548975
Use less PSI power	456456
All Powers	537893
Unlimited Ammo	978945

Gareth, Cardiff

CVG *Psi-Ops might not be out over here yet but there's no need to get embarrassed about coming too early, Gareth.*



FLATLINER

THIEF: DEADLY SHADOWS

XBOX, PC

If you're still having trouble with guards clinging to you like piles on a cold morning, try whipping your Water Arrow out more often. Obviously, you can use it on flaming torches to plunge areas into total darkness, but any bloodstains left after you've mercilessly pummelled victims can be washed clean away with a well-aimed splosh.

Drew, Birmingham

CVG *Funnily enough, most of the stains I have problems with came from pointy objects in the first place...*

CVG FIRST AID KIT

Needs some light relief? Pop yourself in Nurse CVG's capable hands!

NINJA GAIDEN

XBOX

I've heard whispers in the cherry blossoms that Ninja Gaiden contains unlockable versions of the classic original games in the series. I've sneaked around high and low and still can't find them – any advice?

Kirsty, South London

CVG Yup, you're absolutely right Kirsty – all three original NG cartridges are hidden deep within the game. And if you're anything like me, I know you'll absolutely love the opportunity to pop a couple of extra things in your slot.

✳ *Ninja Gaiden*

Simply revisit Muramasa's shop in the centre of town once you've amassed 50 or more scarabs (they'll carry over from previous games) and he'll hand over a copy of the original Ninja Gaiden cartridge. To play it, head over to Han's Bar and pop it in the old arcade machine.

✳ *Ninja Gaiden 2*

Once you've got the original NG cartridge, creep over to the Clock Tower Plaza and clamber onto the ledge above the multicoloured door. Use your bow and shoot one off in the direction of the clockface. A chest containing the next game will drop onto the building opposite – simply jump down and head over via the doorway at the bottom.

✳ *Ninja Gaiden 3*

Go to Peristyle Passage just before the boss fight area in Chapter 10 and hop up the broken pillar on the left just after the entrance. If you've already fingered the other two carts, you'll find number three here!

SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

PS2

Normally I'm white hot with my trigger finger but I just can't get my skills up and into action with Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow. Is there anything you can do to help me out?

Kev, Southampton

CVG Ah, a bit of Gamer's Droop, eh? Have a good long gander at my tips – these should put the perk back into your playtime...

✳ *Thrashing the bush*

If you're having trouble rummaging through the undergrowth, simply strap on your thermal vision goggles during the jungle levels and those pesky tripwires will stand out like my tips on a chilly day.

✳ *Wolf whistling*

I've never had any trouble taking on too many men at once but if multiple enemies are giving you grief, try this nifty 'whistle and lure' trick. Simply hide in a doorway and whistle to attract a guard – there's nothing like the promise of a good blow to perk a man's interest. Once he arrives, beat him till he's spent then hide the body. Keep it up until you've managed to clear the whole room and can continue unscathed.

✳ *Hide and sneak*

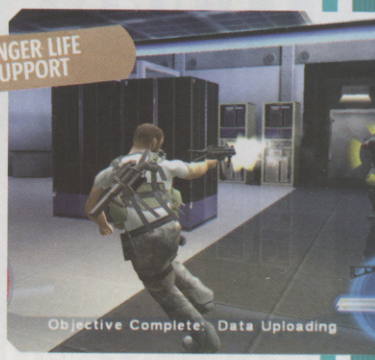
If you've managed to get the unwanted attentions of a man (it happens to me all the time), you'll need to walk SLOWLY if you want to get away undetected. Guards will be ultra-alert to the sounds of your footsteps if they're already out looking for you, so watch it!

THIS MONTH'S KISS OF LIFE

SYPHON FILTER: THE OMEGA STRAIN

PS2

LONGER LIFE SUPPORT



Since you must be used to wiping out all sorts of bugs by now, you seemed like the perfect person to turn to for help with the lurgie-thon that's Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain. Got anything juicy I can sink my teeth into?

Dan, via email

CVG When I'm feeling a bit under the weather, there's nothing better than having a nice meaty weapon tucked into my holster to put the colour back in my cheeks. Luckily for us all then, you can fire off all sorts of juicy pieces in the game once you've ranked up as different specialists.

TEAM EFFICIENCY SPECIALIST
Intermediate (Get two multiplayer par times) ..... M1 Super 90
Advanced (Get four multiplayer par times) ..... Shot Defender All Powers
Expert (Get six multiplayer par times) MDSA3
Elite (Get nine multiplayer par times) M-16k

COMBAT SHARP SHOOTER
Intermediate (Get 200 headshots) ..... Dragunov
Advanced (Get 450 headshots) ..... AU300 Mod-R
Expert (Get 750 headshots) ..... ACR
Elite (Get 1100 headshots) ..... M82 BFG

COMBAT SPECIALIST
Intermediate (Get 300 kills) G33E
Advanced (Get 600 kills) ..... FA-MAS
Expert (Get 900 kills) ..... FAL
Elite (Get 1300 kills) ..... C8 rifle

COMBAT KNIFE SPECIALIST
Intermediate (Get 50 kills) ..... Stiletto
Advanced (Get 100 kills)) ..... Shuriken
Expert (Get 250 kills) ..... IPCA Commando
Elite (Get 450 kills) ..... VibroBlade

TACTICAL EXPLOSIVES SPECIALIST
Intermediate (Get 100 grenade kills) ..... M61 Frag Grenade
Advanced (Get 200 grenade kills) ..... Incendiary Grenade
Expert (Get 350 grenade kills) ..... Sarin nerve agent
Elite (Get 500 grenade kills) M79

NON-LETHAL FORCE SPECIALIST
Intermediate (Get 50 kills) ..... E.D.T.
Advanced (Get 100 kills) ..... DormaGen Gas Grenades
Expert (Get 200 kills) ..... Air Pistol
Elite (Get 300 kills) ..... E.P.D.D.

SURGERY IS ALWAYS OPEN!

Nurse CVG loves a man that knows how to press all the right buttons. Impress her with your fingering technique by texting all your tips, cheats and questions to the number below. Anything a bit long, send an email!

TEXT 4 TIPS

TEXT YOUR TIP TO: **83125**

(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

CVGTIPS@DENNIS.CO.UK

How to enter: first type 'CVG TIPS' and then enter your hint, tip or strategy. Make sure you tell us the name of the game and what format the tip is for!

TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE. SEE PAGE 68 FOR TERMS & CONDITIONS.

TEXT TO WIN

TEXT YOUR ANSWERS TO: **83125**
(SAME FOR T-MOBILE USERS)

How to enter: first type 'CVG SCPT' and then the letter matching your answer. Eg: 'CVG SCPT B'*

*TEXTS COST 50P PLUS STANDARD OPERATING CHARGE

MORE SMOULDERING CVG PRIZES!

SNEAK OFF WITH PERFECT PANDORA TOMORROW GEAR!

Sam Fisher is well sneaky. He's a bit like one of those jobbies that creeps up on you when you least expect it and slides out without touching the sides.

In fact, he's so sneaky that Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow, which we awarded a stonking 94 per cent on Xbox and PC, recently sneaked onto PS2. Stealthy, yeah, but it was never going to get past the CVG spy-detection system, and we awarded the PS2 version 93 per cent.

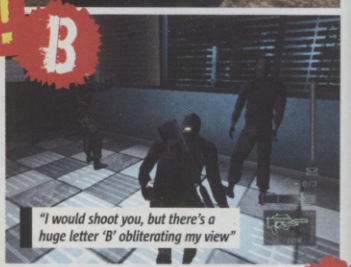
We love Pandora Tomorrow so much that we wanted to give PS2 owners a chance to get their hands on it, so we hooked up with our mates at Ubisoft to get you a bunch of prizes. They're just sitting... hold on, the little buggers have sneaked off!

Got them! Two winners will each receive a spanky new PS2 and a copy of the game to play on it, and we've got eight more copies to hand out to runners-up.

What are you waiting for? Quietly fill in the form, creep down to the postbox and send it in! Or text us your answer via your spy communication device... er, mobile phone. ✷

SMOKE OUT SAM AND YOU COULD WIN

To win, use your super-spy peepers (those are your eyes, which if you are reading this you have a pair of by default), to hunt out the screenshot in which Sam Fisher appears to have set his stealthy butt on fire. Is it...



SNEAKY SPLINTER CELL PRIZES!

WIN ALL THIS!

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✷ **Eight runners-up:** Each receive a copy of Splinter Cell: Pandora Tomorrow on PS2.

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Send your entries to: Computer And Video Games, CCVG409A, Dennis Publishing, PO Box 154, Bradford, BD1 5RZ

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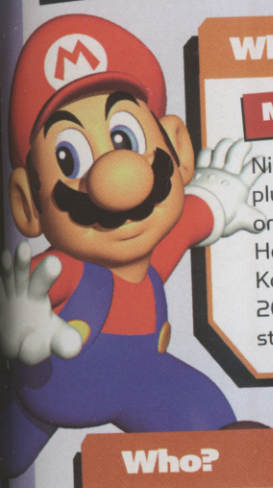
eat well Play BETTER

You don't get to be a gaming god by eating junk food – and these videogame all-stars prove it. Make sure you eat a healthy diet including at least 5 portions of a variety of fruit and veg a day, and you too can be at the top of your game!

5 A DAY
Just Eat More
(fruit & veg)



Who?

Mario

Nintendo's prize plumber is the original game king. He's been crushing Koopas for over 20 years and he's still going strong!

Fave food

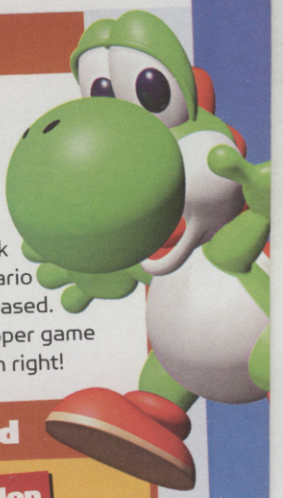
Mushrooms

He just can't get enough of those tasty mushrooms! And no wonder – you can't beat three handfuls of these on a pizza or in a delicious bowl of pasta!

They're good...

For bashing Bowser!

Without his beloved mushrooms, Mario wouldn't have defeated arch-nemesis Bowser and won the heart of Princess Toadstool.



Who?

Yoshi

Our fave green-skinned dino's been Mario's sidekick since Super Mario World was released. Now he's a proper game hero in his own right!

Fave food

Watermelon

Super-healthy Yoshi gobbles these whole! You only have to chew on a two-inch slice to make sure you get 1 of your 5 portions a day!

They're good...

For staying healthy!

Although eating watermelons won't give you Yoshi's super-powers, they will help to keep you healthy. They taste great, too!

Who?

Donkey Kong

This hairy ape kidnapped Mario's girl in his videogame debut. Now he's a good guy!

Fave food

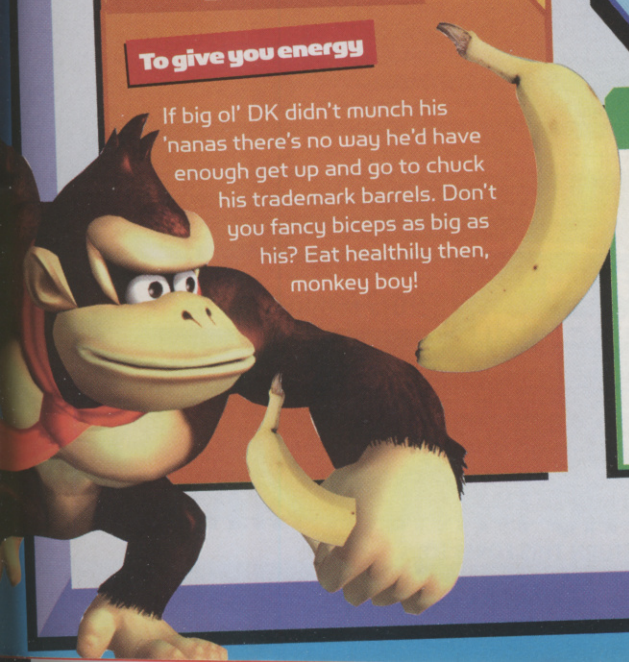
Bananas

Great big bananas of course! And this hairy hero gobbles down 1 a day so he's the strongest chimp in the trees!

They're good...

To give you energy

If big ol' DK didn't munch his 'nanas there's no way he'd have enough get up and go to chuck his trademark barrels. Don't you fancy biceps as big as his? Eat healthily then, monkey boy!



Who?

Pac-man

The original big-mouthed game star eats pretty much anything – ghosts, power pills... And loads of fruit too. Talk about healthy!

Fave food

Cherries

When he's not eating ghosts, Pac-Man stuffs cherries down his cakehole. No wonder, cherries are a great snack and taste fantastic!

They're good...

For beating bad guys

Let's face it, a diet of ghosts and power pills is gonna do you no good. That's why Pac sticks to fruit to make him stronger than the bad guys.

Who?

Crash Bandicoot

This whirling dervish spun and crashed his way onto our game screens back in 1996. Platform games have never been the same since!

Fave food

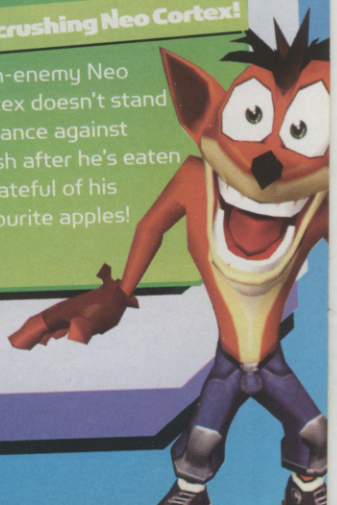
Apples

Big, juicy red apples. And he eats crates of 'em! Chew on just 1 a day and you too can be as cool as this crazy rodent!

They're good...

For crushing Neo Cortex!

Arch-enemy Neo Crotex doesn't stand a chance against Crash after he's eaten a crateful of his favourite apples!



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PLUS! EVERY NEW GAME RATED!

BURNOUT 3

Bumper-bashing, windscreen-smashing, huge piss-off pile-up-crashing review of the ultimate road rager. Stay off the streets!

SECOND SIGHT

Psi-Ops has set a high standard for ESP 'em ups... Can Second Sight measure up, or will its brain explode from all the effort?

DOOM 3

Our fire-and-brimstone review takes the demonic shooter to hell and back. The scorching verdict's gonna need fire-proof eyes!

PLUS! STACKS OF PREVIEWS

FIFA 2005

Is 2005 the year FIFA sticks a brutal two-footer into Pro Evo's shins, or is it still left behind in the dressing room?

TIMESPLITTERS: FUTURE PERFECT

Set the clocks back and scope our in-depth playtest with Free Radical's long-awaited shooter. Will it waste our time again?

GOLDENEYE: ROGUE AGENT

Can it live up to everyone's favourite Bond game? We go undercover and stick our preview gadget up GoldenEye's arse

PLUS! **MORE GAMES DATED AND RATED!** Sudeki ✶ Karaoke Stage ✶ Dynasty Warriors 4: Empires ✶ Crimson Sea 2 ✶ Animal Crossing ✶ OutRun 2 ✶ Second Sight ✶ Headhunter: Redemption ✶ Def Jam 2 ✶ NBA Live 2005 ✶ Madden 2005 ✶ LOTR: Third Age ✶ Mario Vs Donkey Kong ✶ The Sims 2 and loads more!

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COMPUTER & VIDEO GAMES CVG

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12 YEARS AGO

COUNT YOURSELF LUCKY!

CVG is the world's first and best games magazine. But while the mag has forever been a class act, games haven't always been as good as they are today...

1992

Saturday night at the movies? Sod that – CVG was getting all the hardcore action we wanted at home

Everyone loves a good flick – and we're not talking about a quick rummage when the lights are out, ladies.

We slip into adrenaline-doped bliss watching tough guys like Vin 'Slaphead' Diesel growl about the big screen, belching out one-liners while they snap necks and lead-shred the baddies. See, there's a cranky, pistol-whipping chrome-dome somewhere in all of us and that's why we go gaga over the chance to fire up the electronic fun box and step into the digital blood-soaked sandals of our favourite action heroes.

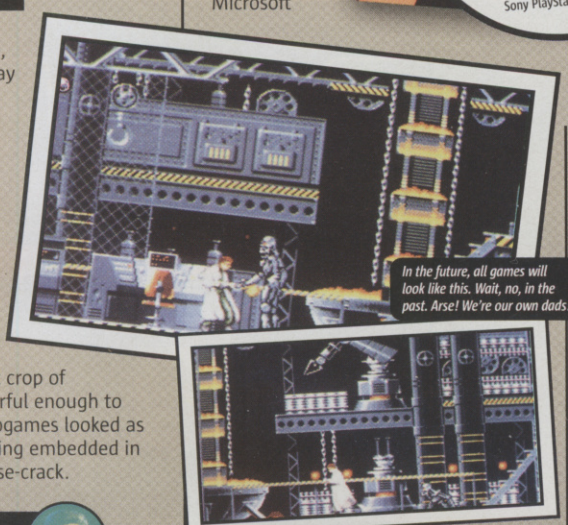
I'LL BE CACK

This month's Riddick game nails the movie, with its frantic gunplay and moody atmosphere, but 12 years back, we were greasing our knacker pouches with excitement over another action hero console cash-in.

In 1992, Big Arnie was still king of the monosyllabic musclemen, but with the then current crop of consoles barely powerful enough to toast a teacake, videogames looked as appealing as an evening embedded in Lisa Riley's sweaty arse-crack.

Our Terminator review for the Megadrive gushed: "What grabs you first is the wicked intro – a perfect reproduction of the opening credits from the film, complete with scrolling letters and flashing cursors." Great. For a similar effect, try getting blind drunk, firing up Microsoft Word and running flat out towards your computer screen.

We'll draw our own conclusions from the screenshots, featuring a ham-fisted Arnie-like mincing across a background that looked like someone sandblasted a bucket of offal and digitised the results.



In the future, all games will look like this. Wait, no, in the past. Arse! We're our own dads!

BEST GAME #127

TOP GEAR – 93%

Okay, so it was about as high-tech as a bobble hat, but CVG loved this old-skool racer. We don't know what's more shocking though – that it was so shamelessly retro, it made Pong look state of the art, or that it was one of the only two-player racers out at the time.

WORST GAME #209

PIT FIGHTER – 19%

Line up two mates, squint until everything's a horrible blurry mess and get them to bash jerkily into each other, grunting awkwardly. Well done! You've just recreated the beat 'em up travesty that is Pit Fighter – a game awful enough to give us the skids, even today.

NINTEN-GO!

Elsewhere, salvation was promised by the imminent arrival of Nintendo's next-gen machine, the SNES – a system proudly boasting 'jaw-dropping stereo sound' in the massive double-page ad. Yes, that's right, now you could hear synthesised electronic warbling in BOTH ears! Hallelujah!

The Big N was delivering in spades though: Super Mario World, Super Soccer, Super Tennis and Super R-Type all had us dribbling like geriatrics before a sponge bath. Of course, it might just have been all those 'Supers' blinkering our finely honed reviewing skills – Super Customs' Cavity Search, anyone?

GET REAL

While games like F-Zero stunned us with new-fangled 3D effects – which compared to today's, looked flatter than Jordan after a run-in with a safety pin – all eyes were firmly on the Next Big Thing, namely, Virtual Reality. Fancy some total bodily immersion in a wholly computer-generated world? Hell yes! Who wouldn't want to look like a nightmarish future version of Stevie Wonder, fannying about in a pair of goggles that looked like you'd got a giant pair of plastic oblong knockers stuck to your face?

For your own sake, we've covered up this guy's big blue digi-knackers. It wasn't pretty

Whether ushering in a brave new era of entertainment or shamelessly cashing in on a nerdy no-mate's wet dream, we managed to dedicate a whole page to the VR movie Lawnmower Man. Okay, so it had pre-Bond Brosnan in, but it still stank worse than a jockstrap after a cross-country run. Still, there was always the game of the film to look forward to, right? ✷

BACK TO THE DRAWING BOARD #127

What with the Lynx, Game Gear and Game Boy all slugging it out for handheld supremacy, there wasn't much room for another contender. You'd have thought.

Yet, we were skirting dangerously close to full-on Y-front meltdown over the PC Engine Laptop – an arcade-quality portable system. Great! The future is now, right? Sure, but it was big enough to take your scalp clean off if you accidentally caught it in the clamshell design. Oh, and it only worked if you plugged it into the mains. Great portability though, if you had an extension lead and never went out.

ISSUE 127

COMPUTER AND CVG VIDEO GAMES

FREE! THE WORLD'S ONLY HAND-HELD MAG

IN THIS ISSUE: TOP GEAR! TAZ DEVIL! JAGUAR! OFF ROAD! RUSHING BEAT! BIG CONSOLE GAMES GALORE!

ISSUE 127 JUNE 1992

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SEGA
NINTENDO
AMIGA/PC/ST
PC ENGINE
NEO GEO

COUNT YOURSELF VERY LUCKY

As the SNES drifted to European shores like a giant interactive turd, Nintendo was blustering over its polygon-powered strap-on for the system – the SNES CD. Predictably, Ninty fell out with co-developer Sony who then trotted back into the shadows for a bit of a fiddle. And what became of the wonder machine? Yup, please welcome our special guest – the Sony PlayStation!

funk up your fone

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CHART TONES	MONO	POLY
Eamon - F**k It	149031	147890
Christina Milian - Dip It Low	151002	146307
Natasha Bedingfield - Single	151003	149891
Keane - Everybody's Changing	151004	149329
Ronan/ Leann - Last Thing On My..	151005	150811
D12 - My Band	149725	149355
Anastacia - Left Outside Alone	149210	149132
The Rasmus - In the Shadows	149400	146287
Maroon 5 - This Love	149900	149086
Streets - Fit But You Know It	150262	149334
Usher - Yeah	148960	146155
Busted - Air Hostess	150261	149304
Ash - Orpheus	151006	149893
Gunther /S'shine Girls-Ding Dong	151007	150092
Special D - Come With Me	149401	146306
McFly - 5 Colours In Her Hair	149257	149265
DJ Casper - Cha Cha Slide	148623	148627
Lostprophets - Wake Up Make a..	151008	151010
Boogie Pimps - Sunny	150264	149375
Gabrielle - Stay the Same	151009	151011

DANCE	MONO	POLY
Gia - Despina Vandi	140279	138348
Good Luck - Basement Jaxx	146054	143730
So Confused - 2play Ft Raghav	146159	146160
Somebody To Love-Boogie Pimps	144376	117101
Born Slippy Nuxx - Underworld	126478	116975
Fly On The Wings Of - Xtm & Dj	116215	118500
Make Luv - Room 5	111639	111643
Boys Of Summer - Dj Sammy	110321	110627
Logical Song - Scooter	102313	107043
Weekend - Scooter	112641	112592
Ur A Superstar - Love Inc	109977	107822
Rubberneckin - Elvis Presley	124657	124635
Who Said - Planet Funk	122492	121696
All In My Head - Kosheen	121730	121533
Golden Path -Chemical Brothers	124545	124338
Husan -Bhangra Knights	116956	116678

FOOTBALL	MONO	POLY
Arsenal - Vi-erra	122960	122961
Arsenal - Amazing Reds	122962	122963
Aston Villa -Holteenders In The Sky	122964	122965
Aston Villa - Roll Along	122966	122967
Chelsea - Blue Is The Colour	122984	122985
Chelsea - Super Franky Lampard	122986	122987
Chelsea - We are the famous CFC	122988	122989
Everton - He was Just 17	122990	122991
Everton - You Are My Everton	122992	122993
Leeds - We Had Joy	122998	122999
Liverpool - You'll Never Walk Alone	123006	123007
Liverpool - We All Live In A Red..	123008	123009
Man City - Blue Moon	123012	123013
Man United - Our Trophy Back	123016	123017
Man United - The Great Escape	123018	123019
Middlesborough - Boro Till I Die	123024	123025
Newcastle Utd - Blaydon Races	123026	123027
Newcastle Utd - 1 Alan Shearer	123028	123029
Southampton - Mr Eriksson	123034	123035
Southampton - When The Saints	123036	123037
Glory Glory	123038	123039
Spurs - We Are Tottenham	123040	123041
Wolves - King Kenny Miller	123042	123043
Wolves -Hey Jones 'E'	123044	123045
There's Only One....	123048	123049
We've Got That Double Feeling	123052	123053
Here We Go	123056	123057
Match Of The Day	123058	123059

OLD SKOOL	MONO	POLY
Let Me Be Your Fantasy - Baby D	-	116148
Rappers Delight - Sugarhill Gang	111774	111849
Hanging On A String - Loose Ends	111755	111830
Gotta Have Your Love - Mantronix	111764	111839
Cant Hide Your Love - David Joseph	111734	111809
All Night Long - Mary Jane Girls	111779	111854
Kiss From A Rose - Seal	100078	108564
Gonna Go My Way - Lenny Kravitz	-	109352

TOP SELLERS	MONO	POLY
Where Is The Luv - Black Eyed Ps	120393	121454
Fields Of Athenray	100381	108273
2 + 2 = Radiohead	143300	126719
Halloween theme	100048	109159
Superstar- Jamelia	124982	125020
Lose Yourself - Eminem	138518	107810
X Gon Give It Ya - Dmx	101360	116167
Skater Boi - Avril Lavigne	108011	110068
You're A Superstar - Love Inc	109977	107822
Pass That Dutch - Missy Elliott	143849	126080
Pink Panther theme	100632	107771
Bat Out Of Hell - Meatloaf	100343	119445
Come Undone - Robbie	112605	115736
Breathe - Blu Cantrell	120539	120508
Xtm & Dj Chucky -On The Wings	116215	118500
Lose Yourself - Eminem	108002	107810
Bring Me To Life Evanescence	110559	111603
Clocks - Coldplay	108122	111125
Simply The Best - Tina Turner	100802	120612
Great Escape	100382	123019

ROCK MUSIC	MONO	POLY
Going Under- Evanescence	122505	123070
The Boys Of Summer - The Ataris	122485	124623
Bring Me To Life Evanescence	110559	111603
Did My Time - Korn	123328	121873
St Anger - Metallica	120383	120615
Faint - Linkin Park	112692	120216
The Anthem -Good Charlotte	110370	123074
Headstrong -Trapt	111160	N/A
She Hates Me -Puddle Of Mudd	102548	N/A
Sleeping Awake -P.O.D.	116230	N/A
Somewhere I Belong -Linkin Park	111021	111688
Times Like These - Foo Fighters	110059	107856
Minerva - Deftones	117180	117186
Mobscene - Marilyn Manson	116924	117261
Young & Hopeless -Good Charlotte	120300	N/A
Addicted To Love - R Palmer	111616	111514

TV & FILM	MONO	POLY
Airwolf	100621	108213
A Team	100682	107898
Axel F	100010	108195
Eye Of The Tiger	100687	108299
Friends	110615	108276
Good, Bad, Ugly	100689	108621
Friends	110615	108276
Halloween	100048	109159
The Hulk	101155	109167
Italian Job	100691	107026
Jackass	102708	117260
James Bond	100016	107023
Jaws	100764	109171
Lord Of The Rings	101158	108715
Mission Impossible	100142	107896
Miami Vice	101308	109117
Only Fools & Horses	101226	109069
Pulp Fiction	100695	108476
Raiders Of The Lost Ark	100126	109223
X Files	100160	109022
Simpsons	102191	107052
Terminator	101086	109255

RNB CHART	MONO	POLY
Hey Mama - Black Eyed Peas	149069	149074
If I Can't - 50 Cent	112700	126530
Baby I Love You- Jo Lopez	148923	144515
Yeah - Usher	148960	146155
The Way You Move - Outkast	125613	126028
Must Be Love-Fya	148626	148019
Dude - Beenie Man	148967	148628
Can't Get Enough - Raghav	149041	148014
She Wants To Move Nerd	N/A	148029
Fell In Love With A Boy - J Stone	148947	146259
Clubbin Marques Houston	149072	149077
Through The Wire - Kanye West	148988	146290
Another Day - Lemar	148360	146297
Badaboom - B2K Feat Fabolous	144374	N/A

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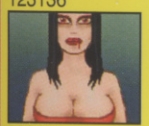
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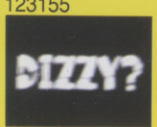

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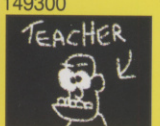

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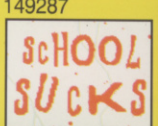

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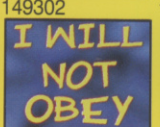

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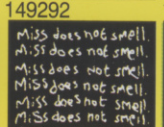

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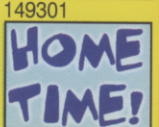

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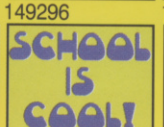

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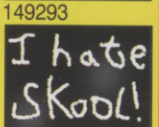

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